"HOW ARE WE DOING?"
EXPLORING ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN TEXTS AND ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS IN SURREY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

DANIEL PUI-YIN SHIU

M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1998
B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 1992
B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

(Educational Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2008

© Daniel Pui-Yin Shiu, 2008

ABSTRACT

In its annual report, "How Are We Doing?", British Columbia's Ministry of Education assesses Aboriginal students' participation and graduation rates, both of which have been consistently below those of non-Aboriginal students. In addressing the question, "How are we doing?", this thesis examines the visual images and representations of Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia's secondary Social Studies textbooks as well as the Aboriginal programs offered in the Surrey School District. The implications affect both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as the study hopes to encourage and improve cross-cultural responsiveness between and among them and to promote public discourse in the education for and of Aboriginal peoples.

Negative portrayals and representations of Aboriginal peoples were common in textbooks of the past as documented by various studies. In reviewing the Surrey School District's currently recommended Social Studies textbooks, four main concerns continue to exist and persist: Aboriginal peoples continue to be marginalized, essentialized, seen as a problem, and decontextualized. However, one of the ministry's approved courses, BC First Nations Studies 12, attempts to address these inequities. Its recommended textbook is based on Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology, empowering and giving voice to Aboriginal peoples.

Through the interviews of eight educators who assist Aboriginal students in the Surrey School District, this study offers some of their insights to improve student "success". Aboriginal students need to accept and embrace their identity, not only to build their self-esteem but also to honour their own cultures. Educators need to redefine "success" beyond academic achievement to include Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology within their teaching and evaluating practices and become more cognizant of and sensitive to the challenges and triumphs of their students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Universities need to re-address the training of future educators to include Aboriginal issues in order for them to gain greater historical understanding and, in turn, empathy and compassion. These practical initiatives reflect the progress and movement in addressing the challenges and hopes of Aboriginal peoples in their journey toward real self-determination and decolonization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Table of Contents iii

List of Figures vii

Acknowledgements ix

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1

Journey to the PhD 2
Rationale and Statement of the Topic 3
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions 5
Negotiated Roles and Identities 6
  Role and Identity as an Educator 6
  Role and Identity as a Non-Aboriginal Researcher 8

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY 11

Analysis of Images Within British Columbia's Social Studies Textbooks 11
Interviews of Aboriginal Education Professionals in Surrey 14
Limitations to the Study 19
Concluding Remarks 20

CHAPTER 3 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 21

Aboriginal Education in Canada 21
  Colonization: Residential School Rhetoric and Reality 21
  Colonization: The Legacy of Residential Schools 26
    Language and Culture 26
    Identity 27
    Sense of Place 29
    Indigenous Knowledge and Ways of Learning 29
  Decolonization: A Journey Toward Self-Determination 30
Aboriginal Images and Representations in Texts 36
  Textbooks as Collective History and Memory 37
  An Overview of Textbook Evaluations 40
    Studies in the 1960s 42
    Studies in the 1970s 44
    Studies in the 1980s 46
    Studies in the 1990 to the Present 47

Future Studies 49
Concluding Remarks 51

CHAPTER 4 ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN SURREY DISTRICT'S SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTS 52

BC Secondary Social Studies Provincial Curricula 52
Textbook Images of Aboriginal Peoples 55
Aboriginal Peoples as Marginalized 55
Aboriginal Peoples as Essentialized 59
Aboriginal Peoples as a Problem 64
Aboriginal Peoples as Decontextualized 70
Challenging Traditional Images of Aboriginal Peoples 72
Positive Images of Aboriginal Peoples 74
Inclusion and Integration of Aboriginal Peoples 76
Concluding Remarks 79

CHAPTER 5 BC FIRST NATIONS STUDIES 12 COURSE AND TEXTBOOK 81

Overview of BC First Nations Studies 12 - The Course 81
Textbook Images of Aboriginal Peoples in BC First Nations Studies 12 85
BC First Nations Studies – The Textbook 85
Concluding Remarks 93

CHAPTER 6 ABORIGINAL EDUCATION: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT 95

Ministry of Education Overview 95
Assessing the Climate 95
Strategies and Initiatives 97
Accountability Contracts 97
District Reviews 98
Enhancement Agreements 98
Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project 99
Aboriginal Support Worker's Handbook 102
Recent Policies 102
Surrey School District Overview 103
District Reports 104
Accountability Contract 104
District Review Report 106
Annual District Report 107
Aboriginal Education Department 108
District Initiatives and Programs 108
Concluding Remarks 110

CHAPTER 7 INTERVIEWS **112**

District Principal of Aboriginal Education - Gayle 113
Background and Role 113
Issues and Challenges 114
Impact and Recommendations 117
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 118
Aboriginal Helping Teacher - Angus 119
Background and Role 119
Issues and Challenges 119
Impact and Recommendations 122
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 124
Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Worker - Bonita 125
Background and Role 125
Issues and Challenges 125
Impact and Recommendations 128
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 129
Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator - Debra 129
Background and Role 129
Issues and Challenges 130
Impact and Recommendations 131
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 132
Aboriginal Support Teacher - Abdullah 133
Background and Role 133
Issues and Challenges 134
Impact and Recommendations 136
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 137
Aboriginal Support Teacher - David 138
Background and Role 138
Issues and Challenges 139
Impact and Recommendations 141
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 142
BC First Nations Studies 12 Teacher / Tutorial Assistant - Brenda 143
Background and Role 143
Goals and Approaches 144
Issues and Challenges 146
Impact and Recommendations 148
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 149
BC First Nations Studies 12 Teacher - Stacey 150
Background and Role 150
Goals and Approaches 152
Issues and Challenges 152
Impact and Recommendations 154
Reflections and Concluding Remarks 155
Concluding Remarks on the Interviews 156

CHAPTER 8 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS ... 158

A Sense of Disconnectedness ... 158
Identity and Culture ... 159
Success ... 160
Universities ... 161
Parents ... 162
Teachers ... 163
A Sense of Hope ... 164
Identity and Culture ... 164
Success ... 166
Provincial Ministry and School District ... 166
Parents ... 167
Teachers ... 167
Concluding Remarks ... 169

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION ... 170

Summary of Findings ... 170
Pedagogical Implications ... 173
Teacher Education Programs and Teacher In-Service ... 173
Textbooks in the Classroom ... 174
Evaluation and Assessment ... 175
Classroom Delivery and Dynamics ... 176
Concluding Reflections ... 178

CHAPTER 10 EPILOGUE ... 181

BIBLIOGRAPHY ... 185

APPENDIX ... 197

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 "Discovery of Canada"....56
Figure 4.2 Henry Kelsey with Assiniboine People....57
Figure 4.3 Étienne Brûlé....58
Figure 4.4 The Death of Wolfe....58
Figure 4.5 Blackfoot family with a travois....60
Figure 4.6 Sun Dance....60
Figure 4.7 "Battle of Seven Oaks"....62
Figure 4.8 Gitxsan member celebrating....63
Figure 4.9 Phanuelie Palluq performing a drum dance....63
Figure 4.10 Ceremonial Talking Stick....63
Figure 4.11 Eagle Dance....63
Figure 4.12 Woman performing traditional dance for protest....65
Figure 4.13 Mi'kmaq boy and New Brunswick fishing rights....65
Figure 4.14 Mohawk warrior and Canadian soldier....66
Figure 4.15 Mohawk woman with child....66
Figure 4.16 Ipperwash incident....67
Figure 4.17 Stoney Band receiving federal money....67
Figure 4.18 Residents in Davis Inlet....68
Figure 4.19 Children in a northern Manitoba reserve....69
Figure 4.20 Métis on horseback....71
Figure 4.21 Romanticizing Viking history....72
Figure 4.22 "Execution of Thomas Scott"....73
Figure 4.23 Father with his Westernized children....74
Figure 4.24 Transformation of Thomas Moore....74
Figure 4.25 Scene from "Diary of a Crazy Boy"....75
Figure 4.26 Contemporary Aboriginal life....75
Figure 5.1 Woman weaving lynx strips....88
Figure 5.2 Preparation for a potlatch in Alert Bay....88
Figure 5.3 Ewen Point of Stó:lo Nation collecting bark....89

Figure 5.4 Gwen Point and Helen Joe of Stó:lo Nation working with cedar bark 89
Figure 5.5 David Neel with his "Keeper of the Animals" mask 90
Figure 5.6 1980 mass protest against proposed changes to the Constitution 91
Figure 5.7 Same mass protest 91
Figure 5.8 Gitxsan Elder blocking road 91
Figure 5.9 Participants in Native Youth Movement 92

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to my committee members who have guided and supported me throughout the entire doctoral program. I offer thanks to Dr. Penney Clark for her invaluable insights and knowledge of BC's Social Studies curricula, without which part of this thesis could not have been written. I offer thanks to Dr. Jean Barman for her thoroughness and thoughtfulness during the revision stages and for her continual encouragement and advice. Her guidance and support kept me grounded and focused. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Michael Marker who initially inspired me to pursue research in Aboriginal education. He has enthusiastically supported this study and, in the process, has challenged me to be a better educator to all the students I teach.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Helen Raptis, my external examiner, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald and Dr. Walt Werner, my university examiners, for all their thoughtful comments and suggestions which helped strengthen the thesis.

To all the colleagues who participated in the study, I would like to acknowledge both their generosity in taking time for the interviews and their professional dedication and compassion toward the students they teach.

Special thanks are owed to my parents who have supported me throughout all my years of education and who have taught me the value of an education. Finally, I would like to offer my deepest and sincerest gratitude, appreciation, and thanks to my wife, Colleen Too, who has been a constant encourager and supporter throughout my doctoral journey -- emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Growing up as a Chinese immigrant whose parents were teachers, I was taught to value education, and in the process I developed a passion not only for learning but for teaching as well. I still clearly remember my Grade 7 teacher who cared not only for his students' academic success but also for their future success in life. He saw us as individuals who had individual strengths and challenges, yet he would look for the potential in all of us amidst our failures, encouraging us to achieve our own excellence. From that time on, I believed that teaching would not only be my profession but my vocation.

My path to becoming a teacher became more of a reality after being accepted into UBC's Faculty of Education in 1990. I distinctly remember the motivating mantra as I walked out of the first orientation class as a student teacher that September -- "we can make a difference". Inspired, I wanted to "make a difference" just as my Grade 7 teacher made a difference for me.

During the last fifteen years of public school teaching in the Surrey School District, however, a number of challenging circumstances have tested my hope and aspiration of making a difference in the lives of students: teaching courses outside my field of expertise; being "bounced" from school to school without a permanent contract; adapting and modifying course content for a growing number of special needs students in the classroom; adopting the changing expectations, requirements, and prerequisites from the provincial Ministry of Education both for courses and for graduation; and dealing with the occasional conflicting politics between and among school boards, school administrations, and unions. Yet, despite these issues, my focus as a teacher has remained the same -- how do I make a difference in the lives of those I teach? With a little more wisdom now, I have come to the realization and acceptance that I may not in the end make much or even any difference in the lives of students but, more importantly, that students will continually make a difference in mine.

Journey to the PhD

After completing my Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at UBC with a focus on multicultural education, I thought my journey into the world of institutionalized academia would end and life as a public school teacher would continue uninterrupted. However, with encouragement from a colleague who completed his doctorate in Educational Studies, my passion for learning and academic research was again piqued, and I applied to the department with the initial intention of furthering my work in the field of multicultural education in the Surrey School District, examining its historical evolution and developments. I had to make sacrifices and take risks in pursuing a doctorate degree: professionally, I left my teaching position at the secondary school I had taught for the last seven years; financially, I lost a year's income while fulfilling the doctoral residency requirement; but most of all, academically, I had to face my fears of seminars where "higher education" and intellectual discourse would be debated, critiqued, and challenged.

I began my course work in the summer in the familiar field of multiculturalism and anti-racism. Given the brevity and intensity of the course, however, I found selecting a research topic difficult and in the midst of panicking, I chose to write a paper analyzing the images and portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in Social Studies 11 textbooks.[1] Though I had no intention in pursuing research in Aboriginal education or issues at that time, it would become the start of a new journey in the PhD program.

Reflectively and reflexively, I began to question why I was so reluctant in researching Aboriginal issues after my first course was completed. There was a sense of discomfort as an educator, and as I delved deeper I had to face my realization, admission, and confession as a public school educator: that I, despite having a graduate degree with a thesis about multiculturalism, despite having used various lesson plans and approaches in the classroom, and despite having more than a decade of teaching experience, have failed convincingly to dispel some students of their negative stereotypes and images of Aboriginal peoples.[2] I

[1] I have taught Social Studies 11 numerous times and was well acquainted with the course and its recommended textbooks as approved by the Surrey School District Learning Resource Services. I found, therefore, the topic to be manageable and "do-able" given the time constraints.

[2] The term "Aboriginal peoples" will be used throughout this dissertation as a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants before European contact (see Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Communications Branch, 2002). According to the federal government, Aboriginal peoples include "First Nations" (sometimes referred to as "Indian"), "Inuit", and "Métis". The term "First Nations", which is

found that students in general tend to see Aboriginal peoples as illegal and occasionally hostile protesters, alcohol abusers and drug addicts, welfare recipients with generous tax benefits, homeless people (or what students would colloquially and derogatively call "hobos"), and prostitutes. The more I read and researched, the more I realized that such gross misconceptions of Aboriginal peoples were perpetuated not only from contemporary media sensationalization but from some of the images portrayed in textbooks used in the classroom and that I was also part of the problem and I felt compelled to address the issue in a research study.

The shift in focus became clearer when one evening the local news reported that only 40% of Aboriginal students graduated from secondary schools in British Columbia. Questions flooded into my mind. Why is their graduation rate so low? Why are they "failing" or dropping out so much? What about the Aboriginal students in my classroom? How are they doing academically and socially? How can I reach out to help guide their secondary school years? Am I failing them? Or worse yet, how am I failing them? As I grappled with these questions and issues, continually wanting to make a difference in students' lives, I decided to change my dissertation topic from multicultural education to Aboriginal education and programs specifically in the Surrey School District, as it would hold greater meaning and relevance to my own professional development and perhaps make a difference to others in the district as well.

Rationale and Statement of the Topic

Historically, the federal government has for much of the twentieth century imposed upon the Aboriginal peoples its assimilative educational policies and institutions. It has paternalistically ignored and effectively silenced the voices of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Only recently has the history and legacy of this colonization been documented and

---

also used in the dissertation, came into usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", although it has no legal definition. "First Nations" carries a significant political connotation while "Aboriginal peoples" has become an accepted self-identifying term used to designate those of First Nations ancestry. The term "Indian" refers to all Indigenous people in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis (similar to First Nations) and is occasionally used to be consistent with historical sources, although the term itself is becoming outdated. British Columbia's Ministry of Education uses both terms in their documents and learning resources.

legitimized in public discourse, which has begun to embrace Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology.

In addressing the educational concerns of Aboriginal students in British Columbia (BC), one of the first provincial reports (1997) states that only 33.8% of the self-identified Aboriginal students graduated from high school. Over the years, modest improvements in terms of "performance" and "success" have occurred as reported in BC's *Aboriginal Report - How Are We Doing? 2004/05 (Province - Public Schools Only)*. However, concerns of "non-achievement" among Aboriginal students at both provincial and district levels still exist as graduation rates have remained consistently low: 42% in 2002, 46% in 2003 and 2004, 48% in 2005 and 47% in 2006 (BC Ministry of Education, 2006e, p. 3).[3]

As a public school educator in the Surrey School District, I have a vested interest in these results, not only to improve upon the work of the school district and its professional educators but also, more importantly and specifically, to increase the "success" of Aboriginal students in the classroom. Although Surrey only has 2,799 (or 4.2%) of the province's "self-identified" Aboriginal students, it is the largest school district provincially. Statistically, the graduation rate for Aboriginal students in Surrey has fluctuated during the last five years, somewhat matching the provincial averages: 37% in 2002, 41% in 2003, 39% in 2004, 50% in 2005, and 38% in 2006 (BC Ministry of Education, 2006f, p. 3).

In addressing Aboriginal education in BC, both the Ministry of Education and Surrey School District have initiated and implemented various policies and programs not only for Aboriginal students but also for non-Aboriginal students. The Ministry of Education has proposed and mandated greater inclusion of Aboriginal peoples' history in the Social Studies curricula, including the implementation of a newly revised BC First Nations Studies 12 course (completed draft in 2005 and full implementation in the 2007/08 school year) in order to raise the profile, relevance, and connectedness for Aboriginal students. For the first time, a separate course that "focuses on the diversity, depth, and integrity of the cultures of British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples" is formally recognized and examined provincially (BC

[3] The Dogwood Diploma is BC's certification of graduation from secondary school after completing the necessary combination of credits and ministry approved courses.

Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 3).[4] The course is unique in the area of Social Studies in that it is designed to "introduce authentic Aboriginal content into the senior secondary curriculum with the support of Aboriginal peoples" and emphasizes the traditions, history, and present realities of BC's First Nations Peoples (p. 3). The Surrey School District has established its own Aboriginal Education Department with a district principal who oversees it. The department has continually evolved and developed with a focus on creating and adapting learning resources and programs for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in order to achieve greater "success".

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

In exploring the broader issues of colonization/decolonization and of inclusion/exclusion, the main purpose of the study is twofold. First, the study examines visual images and representations of Aboriginal peoples in secondary Social Studies textbooks because students would be most exposed to them in that particular discipline than in any other. Examining these images in turn may help teachers in the classroom address and explain to students possible misrepresentations and negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples. A closer look at one particular textbook for BC First Nations Studies 12 will highlight some important inclusions for Aboriginal education. Second, the study examines Surrey's Aboriginal Educational Programs at the secondary school level through various interviews with teaching colleagues in the district who are directly implementing such programs. Some background information is also presented with regard to current provincial and district policies and publications in order to provide a snapshot as to "how we are doing" in Aboriginal education. However, the main focus remains on the interviews of professional educators in Surrey, which provide insights into the needs and concerns of Aboriginal students and into the existing programs in Surrey secondary schools.

The hope of this study is to help improve cross-cultural responsiveness between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the Surrey School District. It may also encourage further research not only in Surrey but also in other school districts in order to

---

[4] Although BC First Nations Studies 12 was first introduced in 2000, it was not a provincially examinable course. With the newly revised curriculum in 2005/2006, the course became not only a provincially examinable course but one that could replace Social Studies 11 as a prerequisite course for graduation.

promote discourse in the evolving and transforming education not only for but also of Aboriginal peoples. As Marker (2000) expresses, "having nonnative teachers learn about the local culture and immersing them in a meaningful cross-cultural experience broadens their teaching encounter, helping them become an educational asset to the community".

The study then, in turn, explores two main research questions: 1) How are Aboriginal peoples represented and reflected in secondary school texts? 2) How do key individuals working within the Surrey School District perceive Aboriginal education as it is implemented in the district?

Negotiated Roles and Identities

In positioning myself in this study, I have two main roles and identities, each dichotomous in nature and potentially problematic. The following sections describe my conflicting roles as a public educator and as a non-Aboriginal researcher, since both represent an institutionalized system that historically has oppressed the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Yet, a balance exists with these identities that offers a unique perspective into the study, one that consists of being both an "Insider" and an "Outsider".

Role and Identity as an Educator

As an educator in the public school system, I am both an insider and outsider in this study. Teaching secondary students in Surrey has provided me with "inside" knowledge and experience in addressing students' academic needs and concerns as well as being familiar with the various learning resources, programs, and policies at the school, district, and provincial levels. However, I am also an outsider, as one who symbolizes and represents the institutionalization of education, especially from the lens of Aboriginal peoples. Formal education has been and continues to be a "value-laden political process that takes place in the classroom, a contested site that displays competing discourses, unique experiences, silences, resistance, and compliance" (Bruno-Jofre and Schiralli, 2002, p. 120). For Aboriginal peoples, formal education has been historically synonymous with colonization and assimilation through residential schooling despite the efforts of recent federal governments in apologizing and offering reconciliatory redress and compensation. "Imperialism still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly. . . . [It is] a shared language . . . as an epic

story telling of huge devastation, painful struggle and persistent survival" (Smith, 1999, p. 19). I, as an educator, still represent part of that legacy and must remain vigilant of this in the classroom.[5] Thus, as an outsider and non-Aboriginal person, I can only know about the history and experiences of Aboriginal peoples but not of them.

Philosophically, my view on education and its purposes continues to evolve, as I reflect upon my past and present experiences in and out of the classroom as both a graduate student and a public school teacher. Initially, to hide my insecurities as a "rookie" teacher, I began my career with the noble yet perhaps overly naive notion that I would and could academically make a difference in students' lives, that I would instill students with a great wealth of historical knowledge, understanding, and empathy. Following mostly a Eurocentrically prescribed curriculum and using the recommended textbooks, I focused not only on critical thinking skills but also on the historical content of the courses I taught. However, despite incorporating simulation games, role-playing, debates, and discussions into the lesson plans, results on tests remained generally static. I viewed historical people, events, and their impact more than trivial pursuit. As Jack Granatstein (1998), a Canadian historian, would later write that "history matters, and we forget this truth at our peril" (p. xviii), I adamantly believed that history formed the heart of a nation, including the past, present, and even future, and attempted to convey this ideal to my students. However, what I had forgotten in the midst of "teaching history" was my audience. Some students thrived on learning history while others (and perhaps most) did not as they appeared apathetic at worst, indifferent at best. However, I did not want them to memorize for the sake of memorizing; instead, some meaning and purpose had to exist. Memorization and recollection of "history" were skills, but as I gained more teaching experience (and hopefully more wisdom), I began to realize that they were not the main skills I wanted to instill in my classes. Scoring high on examinations was not the determining factor or indication of learning as I had once believed. For students, learning was being in the moment, engaged in the processes and the experiences in and out of the classroom -- academically, socially, and affectively. Although I would like students to know that 1867 was the year of Canada's Confederation, that Riel "resisted" the federal government in 1885, and that Canadians fought valiantly at Vimy

---

[5] Examining and analyzing classroom resources for Eurocentric bias has become a priority for me in order to address and confront potentially negative stereotyping and prejudiced images and ideas among students.

Ridge in 1917, I no longer expect them to memorize such historical facts. Following the principles of the four R's by Kirkness and Bernhardt (1991), my philosophy on educating students is now based on respect (respecting students, including their cultures, backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses), relevance (making learning relevant to students by making connections to their "world"), reciprocity (learning from students becomes part of teaching them), and responsibility (empowering students with a sense of accomplishment and success). Having students actively engaging in and enjoying the process of learning history has now become my main concern and goal as an educator where students become life-long learners.

Role and Identity as a Non-Aboriginal Researcher

As a Chinese-Canadian, I do consider myself as an outsider in this study; however, my distinctive position as a non-Aboriginal researcher provides a unique perspective. Despite the political recognition of Trudeau's policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" in the 1970s, incidences of ethnic prejudice and racism were not uncommon and I did not escape the name-calling and bullying while growing up in Vancouver during that time. Thus, at a young age, I became highly aware of and sensitive to my cultural "minorityness" and visible differences that were made all too painfully clearer in and by mainstream society. In response, I attempted to shed my "ethnic baggage" by quickly acculturating and assimilating. Academically and socially, I coerced myself into learning English to hide my sense of inferiority and to prove my sense of equality in society, so much that regrettably I now have "lost" fluency in my native tongue. Affectively, and perhaps more tragically, I simply felt ashamed of my cultural background, at times to the point of public embarrassment.

Although I cannot even begin to compare my experiences of racial intolerance with those suffered by Aboriginal peoples, I can to a very small degree empathize with them on the pressures of assimilation. However, my "assimilative" process was self-imposed as a reaction and response to societal intolerance and "unacceptance" while those of the Aboriginal peoples was officially prescribed and externally imposed by the federal government.

I must also be vigilant of the multicultural and anti-racist lens that I have espoused and championed as both a teacher and immigrant. While multicultural education generally focuses on cultural similarities and differences, anti-racist education generally focuses on issues of equality and equity. Though both have their own merits in the classroom, they do not analyze the impact of colonialism nor do they adequately challenge the Eurocentric curriculum (Fletcher, 2000). Moreover, multiculturalism "does not adequately include the unique experience of indigenous people, nor does it describe epistemic collision with the dominant society" (Marker, 2006, p. 7). Marker further argues:

> Whereas other minoritized groups demand revisionist histories and increased access to power within educational institutions, indigenous people present a more direct challenge to the core assumptions about life's goals and purposes. . . . [Indigenous] cultures posit a social stance outside of assertions of pluralism, rather, claims to moral and epistemic pre-eminence based on ancient and sustained relationships to land. (p. 5)
>
> A curriculum and classroom culture that emphasize bankrupt abstractions such as "thinking globally" only promote a marketized version of ethnocentrism and chauvinism in its disinterest in the local land and history. (p. 18)

Marker has challenged me as an educator and as an individual to critique mainstream education's cultural assumptions of local ecology and history, where I should encourage students "to see their own surroundings as constructed out of ideological and ecological histories" as a way to produce more "cross-cultural consciousness and awareness of indigenous perspectives" (p. 18).

Today, in the eyes of mainstream society, I have "succeeded" despite and in spite of ethnic / racial barriers by becoming a teacher with academic and professional credentials; yet, my "success" partially rests on being a beneficiary of colonialism where academic achievement in Eurocentrically institutionalized schools is merited, a factor I must consciously continue to acknowledge.

Though compartmentalized in description here, my roles and identities as a public school teacher and as a non-Aboriginal researcher are inextricably integrated and synthesized, forming a lens through which my own identity is shaped that cannot be

deconstructed or decontextualized.[6] For this study, my position constitutes a unique perspective that may provide greater objectivity and validity. First, I am freer to explore the issues of Aboriginal education and programs in the Surrey School District without the political and social pressures of being "too close" to the study. Second, I am perceived as a "colonized other" without the historically political and social stigma of being a "colonizing other". Finally, through this study, I have learned more about cross-cultural relations between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and teachers, gaining wisdom and experience I wish to pass on to both students and colleagues, a role with which I have been bestowed and for which I am grateful.

---

[6] As Alcoff argues that identity politics is "one that recognizes the dynamic, variable, and negotiated character of identity" (2000, p. 341), the roles that one plays are interdependent and cannot be easily compartmentalized. Identity is also largely developed through the process of 'othering' in which it is not positively defined in terms of what it consists of, but negatively in terms of what it is not (van Hoven, Meijering, and Huigen, 2005).

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

This study explores both Aboriginal images and representation in Social Studies textbooks at the secondary school level as well as the various educational programs for Aboriginal secondary students in Surrey. The methodology is twofold: textbook analysis in terms of images for the former and ethnographic interviews for the latter. Examining the images within textbooks used at the secondary school level provides a glimpse into what students (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) are exposed in the classroom, while interviewing colleagues and professionals implementing Aboriginal programs provides a glimpse into how Aboriginal students are doing in the district. Both offer approaches to reaching greater cross cultural responsiveness between and among not only Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students but also to educators.

Analysis of Images Within British Columbia's Social Studies Textbooks

According to the Ministry of Education's secondary school curricula guides for Social Studies, Aboriginal peoples and issues are found in Grades 9-12: Social Studies 9, 10, and 11 and BC First Nations Studies 12. Each of these courses is further explained in its own Integrated Resource Package (IRP), which prescribes and describes (i) a rationale for the course, (ii) themes in the course, (iii) considerations for program delivery (i.e., how to implement the course in the classroom), (iv) content and skills to be acquired through the course, (known as Prescribed Learning Outcomes or PLO), (v) classroom assessment and measuring student achievement, and (vi) recommended learning resources. In essence, IRPs are the curriculum guides for the provincial courses prescribing what students should learn in the course and the tools for teachers to deliver it. In turn, this study examines the corresponding current textbooks that have been approved by the Surrey School District's Learning Resources Services, which compiles and updates a list of "recommended learning resources".[7] To be approved by the district, the textbook must closely follow the provincial ministry's prescribed learning outcomes. These outcomes set the learning standards for each

---

[7] At the time of this study, the most current list of resources for the Surrey School District is dated May 2, 2007. Teachers in the district may access this list from their school's administration or from the employee-linked website.

course and state what each student is expected to know and do by the end of the course: they define the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes for each subject. Because the approval of textbooks are based on how well they match these learning outcomes, the curricula themselves (i.e., the prescribed learning outcomes) are briefly examined with regard to their inclusion of and cultural responsiveness to Aboriginal peoples and issues.

In total, I examined thirteen textbooks that the Surrey School District's Learning Resources Services recommended (May 2007). Three textbooks were listed for Grade 9 Social Studies:

Canada Revisited (Clark & McKay, 1992)[8]

Community Canada (Cruxton & Walker, 1993)

Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations (Cranny & Jarvis, 1998)

Two textbooks were listed for Grade 10 Social Studies:

Horizons: Canada Moves West (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999)

Challenge of the West: A Canadian Retrospective From 1815 to 1914 (Cruxton & Wilson, 1997).

Seven textbooks were listed for Grade 11 Social Studies:

Canada Today (Scully, Smith, & McDevitt, 1996)

Canada: Face of a Nation (Bolotta, Gerrard, & Shortt, 2000)

Canada: Our Century, Our Story (Fielding & Evans, 2001)

Canadian Issues: A Contemporary Perspective (Francis et al., 1998)

Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues (Cranny & Moles, 2001)

Spotlight Canada (Cruxton & Wilson, 2000)

Towards Tomorrow: History (Morton, 1988).

One textbook was listed for BC First Nations Studies 12:

BC First Nations Studies (Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003).

In evaluating the images of Aboriginal peoples and issues, I used the criteria from Jo-Anne Dillabough and Lynn McAlpine's research (1996) and the BC Ministry of

---

[8] For Canada Revisited (Clark and McKay, 1992), the Surrey School District has approved chapters 1 to 6 to correspond with the Canadian component of Social Studies 9 and chapters 7 to 11 for Social Studies 10.

Education's evaluation guidelines (2002). Despite some commonalities, the criteria complement each other in developing a holistic approach in evaluating textbooks.[9]

Images in Social Studies textbooks need to reflect and imbue culturally responsive standards in order to present and represent Aboriginal peoples and issues. More specifically, according to Dillabough and McAlpine (1996), textbooks need to avoid both covert and overt forms of racism when representing Aboriginal peoples: "First Nations people should not be portrayed as a thing of the past, they should be brought into the future, i.e., the contemporary representation of First Nations people 'in their voice' is as important as historical representations of First Nations people" (p. 191). Textbooks should avoid (i) treating First Nations Peoples as a multicultural group, (ii) overemphasizing European exploration and history, (iii) generalizing from one First Nations group to another, and (iv) portraying First Nations Peoples as violent and aggressive.

Textbooks should also recognize Aboriginal peoples' identities -- culturally, spiritually, and historically. Culturally, Aboriginal ways of life, ways of knowing, ways of teaching, and ways of communication (oral tradition and language) all need to be recognized in which their identity "should not be expressed or defined in relation to non-First Nations people" (p. 193). Dillabough and McAlpine further forward the need for textbooks to include certain values inherent in Aboriginal cultures (e.g., cooperation, collaboration, community relationships, harmony and balance, respect, and the importance of family linkages) and a description of the survival of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures: "The importance and need for celebrating, through rituals and related activities, the strength and richness in First Nations culture" (p. 195). Spiritually, a description of the role the creator plays in the lives of Aboriginal peoples and how the creator and other spirits play in educating them about the universe and life need to be recognized. Textbooks should educate students about the role governments have historically played in the evolving processes of self-government, land claims, legal rights. Textbooks in turn should describe how governments have "robb[ed] people of their cultural and spiritual identity through the forced repression of language in public and residential schools" and about the "historical reasons underlying the current hardship faced by First Nations People" (p. 193). More important,

---

[9] Dillabough and McAlpine use the term "First Nations" in describing their evaluation criteria which I will use when referring to their work.

textbooks should explain the role the environment plays in the life of Aboriginal peoples that includes a description of why the environment is crucial to their survival: "Without the cross-cultural tools to reflect on their 'location', in both the larger and the local sense, educators can do more than just be alienated and ineffectual; they can do a lot of harm" (Marker, 2000).

From the Ministry of Education, a number of social considerations are listed as criteria for textbooks before provincial recommendation. Resources should take into account the following guidelines:

1. Recognize the contributions Aboriginal people have made and continue to make in society.
2. Recognize the diversity of Aboriginal societies and avoid traditional stereotypes.
3. Provide accurate information on historical and contemporary Aboriginal cultures.
4. Promote knowledge and understanding of local Aboriginal cultures.
5. Provide an Aboriginal perspective of historical and cultural issues.
6. Avoid undue emphasis on particular problems or conflicts involving Aboriginal groups by balancing content with issues.
7. Avoid putting emphasis on traditional aspects of Aboriginal people to the exclusion of their contemporary realities.

(BC Ministry of Education, 2002a, pp. 16, 41)

These criteria from these two sources, although occasionally overlapping in guidelines, provide a greater encompassing perspective and approach for examining Social Studies curricula and textbooks at the secondary school level as they are less Eurocentric and are more culturally sensitive toward Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology.

Interviewing Aboriginal Education Professionals in Surrey

In examining the various Aboriginal education programs in Surrey, I conducted interviews with eight professionals in the district who work with Aboriginal students in different ways and capacities. The interviews included two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers, one Aboriginal cultural facilitator, one Aboriginal youth care worker, two Aboriginal support workers/teachers, one Aboriginal helping teacher, and the District Principal of Aboriginal Education. Because each individual plays a slightly different role in implementing and delivering the Aboriginal programs to students and each represents a

different region in the Surrey School District itself (covering North, Central, and East areas), their responses give voice in providing greater breadth and insights into the district's programs.[10] Because of this diversity, the interviewees are representative of Surrey's Aboriginal programs.

Initial letters of contact were sent near the start of the 2005/2006 school year to the Aboriginal Department in Surrey regarding this purpose and rationale of this study along with UBC's ethical guidelines. The first people to respond to the letters included Surrey's Aboriginal District Principal and one of the District Helping Teachers, both of whom seemed quite interested in the research. However, only two Support Teachers, one Cultural Facilitator, and one Youth Care Worker responded to the letters of contact.[11] Through further discussion with the Aboriginal District Principal, I discovered that only two schools offered the BC First Nations Studies 12 course, each with one class. I was able to contact the two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers in Surrey through the district teachers' phone directory. After introducing the study and my position as an educator and researcher, both BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers were willing to share their classroom experiences for the study. I interviewed these eight participants during the 2005/2006 school year at their convenience with their permission to record and transcribe their responses using their first names.

Because the two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers need to follow a prescribed provincial curriculum, their role as a classroom teacher is vastly different from the other professional educators who have a more supportive role with Aboriginal students. As such, the two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers received one set of open-ended interview questions while the rest received another, reflecting the various roles in the district. However, both interview schedules touch on the needs, concerns, struggles, and triumphs of Aboriginal students in Surrey. They both address issues that concern Aboriginal education in Surrey which teachers may find beneficial and practical in and out of the classroom, and they

[10] More about their individual roles and responsibilities will be presented in Chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

[11] After the initial letter of contact, correspondance with the interviewees was through electronic mail. Perhaps the 2-week disruption of the 2005/2006 school year due to the teachers' "strike" affected the participation rates as facilitators, teachers, and support workers were attemtping to recover the missed time.

both provide a complementary and a more comprehensive perspective of the policies and programs in the Surrey School District.

In respecting Indigenous methodology, I incorporated the 4Rs of Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) in the interview process. There was respect for the pedagogical knowledge and experiences of the participating educators working with Aboriginal students. Their insights were relevant to Surrey's Aboriginal education programs as the interviewees all try to make a difference in the lives of their students. Learning from the interviewees, I have reciprocated in my own classroom their methods and ideas to encourage and facilitate Aboriginal students to succeed. In listening and recording the interviews, I was reminded that as educators we all have a responsibility, regardless of the role or capacity within the educational system, to empower both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

The 4Rs approach is echoed by Smith (1999) in decolonizing methodologies, which provides a framework for ethical research protocols for non-Aboriginal researchers of Aboriginal issues:

> The term 'respect' is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct. (p. 120)

By giving voice to the professional educators, this study attempts to reframe issues related to Aboriginal education. Though the interview schedules appear fixed, not all questions were posed as the interviewees' stories became the focus, centering on their own voices. The interview schedule, in turn, became a guide as each interview was a journey into the participant's experiences, challenges, successes, and recommendations for improving Aboriginal education in the Surrey School District. Not all questions were needed to discover these insights. As a researcher, I had to honour not only each of the stories they told but also how they were told, and sharing them is a responsibility of research (Smith, 1999).

Interview Schedule for Questions for BC First Nations Studies 12 Teachers:

1. How long have you taught BC First Nations Studies 12?
2. What interested you in teaching BC First Nations Studies 12?
3. From your perspective, why isn't the course offered in other schools?
4. What is your goal in teaching this course? How would these goals be met?
5. How many students are enrolled in the course?
6. Who is taking the course? (What "types" of students? Are there
7. Aboriginal students?)
8. What do you think about the changes to the IRP (Integrated Resource Package)?
9. What sources do you use to fulfill the PLOs (Prescribed Learning Outcomes) and the AIs (Achievement Indicators)?
10. How is the course delivered? (methodology/pedagogy) Is it different from teaching other courses?
11. What do you think are the key units or areas of interest? of concern? of significance? (from both teacher's and students' perspectives)
12. What are the strengths/successes and weaknesses of the course?
13. How could the course be improved?
14. What effect does this course have on the students who take it? on the school as a whole? on you professionally and personally?
15. What do you hope to accomplish through teaching this course?
16. What is your ideal regarding this course?

Interview Schedule for Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator, Youth Care Worker, Support Workers/Teachers, Helping Teacher, and District Principal of Aboriginal Education:

1. How long have you worked with Aboriginal students?
2. What made you interested in working with Aboriginal students / issues?
3. As a (District Principal/Helping Teacher/Aboriginal Coordinator/Support Worker), what is your role in Aboriginal Education in the district or school?
4. How are Aboriginal students identified in Surrey?
5. What do you think are the needs of Aboriginal students in Surrey's secondary schools?
6. What programs or strategies does the district/school offer Aboriginal students in meeting those needs?
7. What challenges or barriers do students/teachers/administrators face?
8. How have such needs/programs/challenges changed over time for students, staff, and administration?
9. What are the "goals" of the programs or strategies?

10. How are the programs or strategies implemented (i.e., How will the goals be met?)
11. How effective are the implemented programs or strategies?
12. What / how can these be improved? (i.e., What necessary changes are required?)
13. Define "success". What does it mean for Aboriginal students to be "successful"?
14. How will Aboriginal students achieve this "success"?
15. Why do you think Aboriginal students, according to provincial statistics, have a lesser participation rate, a lesser "success" rate, and are less likely to "meet / exceed expectations" in provincially administered exams than non-Aboriginal students?
16. What role does identity play for Aboriginal students?
17. How important is such an identity for students in the school setting?
18. How is such an identity maintained/encouraged/promoted in the district/school setting?
19. What is your "ideal" for Aboriginal students in Surrey and how would we get there?
20. Any other issues/concerns/comments/questions?

As to the interview sites, I mostly went to the schools or district office where these facilitators, teachers, and support workers were, although on occasion, a few did come to my school to conduct the interview to accommodate my teaching schedule. Although varying in length, interviews generally lasted from forty-five minutes to a little over an hour each. After completing the transcriptions of all the interviews, I offered a copy for review and response, but none requested one. Each participant stated that he/she trusted my accuracy in content and interpretation of the taped interviews In turn, they respected my professionalism as a colleague within the district.[12]

In terms of analyzing the interviews, the Ministry of Education's annual *Aboriginal Report – How Are We Doing?* provided a thematic framework. The report, according to the Ministry, is

> one component of the ongoing effort to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal students are met and that there is continued improvement in Aboriginal student achievement.
>
> A key goal of the Ministry of Education is improved academic achievement for all students. The education system has made significant

[12] The district principal, however, requested a final draft of the dissertation upon publication, which I will gladly oblige and provide. I will also provide the Surrey School District with a copy to fulfill the ethical review agreement.

> progress towards this goal, and Aboriginal students are experiencing greater success as a result.
>
> This report is intended to provide a basis for examining areas that require attention and focus, as well as identifying successes. (BC Ministry of Education, 2006g, p. i)

In turn, the two balancing themes – one of needs and challenges and one of successes and improvements – became the main focus of analyzing the interviews.

Limitations to the Study

This study has several limitations that need to be made explicit from the onset. Although other courses contain texts that incorporate Aboriginal content, this study focuses on the Social Studies where such content is found most prominently and therefore needs closer examination. The main limitation of the study, however, is more practical than theoretical: schools, and in particular subject departments, have limited budgets and thus cannot obtain / purchase supplementary texts that would enrich and enhance the course material which are further constrained by the district's approval process. In the Surrey School District, schools can only purchase textbooks listed from its Learning Resources Services ("Grade 8-12 Recommended Learning Resources"). Because of such financial and educational restraints, the texts that teachers and students use are those that most closely and comprehensively follow the provincial Integrated Resource Packages' prescribed learning outcomes, and because they are Eurocentric, the texts are as well.

With regard to the interviews, ethnographic texts "are systems . . . of truth" where "power and history work through them in ways their authors cannot fully control" and are therefore considered "partial truths" (Clifford, 1986, p. 7). Despite these "partial truths", the responses of those interviewed provide important perceptions and understandings beyond the implemented programs and institutions they represent. Not only are they "oral evidence", they in effect provide a bonding bridge to the Aboriginal youth in the schools and district, establishing vital relationships that connect students not only to others but also, more importantly, to themselves.

As each interview, and hence interviewee, was unique in his/her point of view, the data collected through the interviews may not necessarily be generalizable beyond the school district despite having some similar themes and ideas. The interviews reflect experiences of

each professional, specific to each case, and with a small but diverse sample of interviews, the study on Aboriginal programs in Surrey is limited in scope. Although generalizability and universality may not be the main goals, the insights provided are still significantly valuable in examining "How Are We Doing?" with Aboriginal education not only as policy writers and implementers but as educators of those who are most effected and affected, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Concluding Remarks

By examining high school Social Studies curricula and their corresponding district recommended textbooks and by inquiring about the current Aboriginal programs in Surrey through interviews, this study is intended to encourage greater cross-cultural responsiveness between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. The two methods used in this study in turn complement such an exploration into the Surrey School District. It is my hope that from this study more teachers would re-examine their role in including Aboriginal issues in their classes for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

For me, this research has been a remarkable journey. During the PhD process, I have gained valuable insights through the experiences and reflections of my colleagues as I continually re-evaluate my own philosophies and teaching practices. Their wisdom in the field of teaching has enriched my own role as an educator, as I was not unaffected by their sharing. I have heard and learned of their own struggles and triumphs as educators and will constantly strive to be more empathetic and more compassionate toward not only Aboriginal students but to all students. As a colleague stated in his interview so passionately and eloquently: "We have to have teachers who understand. . . . How we relate to them in class can have such a profound impact. . . As Harry K. Wong [educator and speaker] puts it, 'Each student brings a candle to school everyday, and it's up to us as teachers to light that candle for them'" (Interview, Abdullah, June 22, 2006).

CHAPTER 3
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As background to this study, the literature review is divided into two main sections. First, it provides an historic overview of the colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, focusing on their mis-education (the rhetoric, reality, and legacy of residential schooling). This legacy has led to the beginning of an Aboriginal movement and journey toward decolonization and self-determination. The section on Aboriginal education concludes with a brief description of what the BC's Ministry of Education (Aboriginal Education Department) considers as "Effective Programs" in the province for Aboriginal students as a process toward decolonization. Second, the literature review provides a historic overview of Social Studies textbook evaluations that focused on Aboriginal content, which resulted in some positive changes in the visual and textual portrayals of Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal Education in Canada

European / Western education of "Indians" began as early as 1620 in New France by Catholic missionaries for the purpose of "bringing Christian civilization to the heathen 'Natives'" (Kirkness and Bowman, 1992, p. 7). Religious affiliation with formal education continued as both Catholic and Protestant churches began to establish day schools for "Indians", some of which evolved into residential schools by the early nineteenth century. For the next hundred years, Aboriginal peoples would be subjected to this form of education, which only officially ended with the closing of the last government-run residential school in 1996 in Saskatchewan (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2007).

Colonization: Residential School Rhetoric and Reality

Between 1830 and 1867, the Dominion government began to take some responsibility in providing education for some Aboriginal peoples using funds formerly designated to supply gunpowder and gifts to Native people to construct school buildings and to pay teachers (Burnaby, 1980). More specifically, Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, in 1847, recommended that together with day schools, boarding schools should be established in which the curriculum would focus on practical skills and

religious training. In essence, according to Ryerson, education for the "Indian" would be couched in Christianity: "'With him (the Indian) nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religious feeling'" (as cited in Connelly, Chalmers, and Clark, 1965, p. 13). With the collaboration of Methodist missionaries, the government established reserves and schools where "Natives would be settled and taught basic literacy, agricultural, and industrial trades, as well as principles of Christian morality and belief. The ultimate goal of this program was to create Christianized, civilized, and self-governing Native communities under the protection of the British government" (Furniss, 1995, p. 20).

In 1867, the federal government of Canada, under the terms of the British North American Act, encoded Aboriginal peoples as non-citizens and wards of the state. Federal policy toward Aboriginal peoples explicitly became assimilationist as they were treated as children of the state and were seen as "problems" of the state. As a national goal, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald publicly advocated in Parliament "'to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit to change'" (as cited in Milloy, 2001, p. 6).

By 1880, the Canadian government shifted its emphasis from day schools to residential schools as recommended in the "Report On Industrial Schools For Indians and Half-Breeds" (1879) in order to assimilate Aboriginal peoples.[13] Miller (1996) argues that the main purposes of residential schools became entrenched in paternalistic beliefs and rhetoric: to provide basic academic training, to teach "usable" economic skills, and to assimilate Aboriginal students into mainstream society. Thus, from this assimilationist policy, preference was given to the creation of industrial residential schools away from reserves for older students and to boarding schools for their younger siblings. Attendance would be ensured, and all aspects of life, "from dress to use of English language to behaviour, would be carefully regulated" (Barman, Herbert, & McCaskill, 1986, p. 6). These residential schools would operate under the auspices of the church, both Catholic and Protestant, who became partners in the "formal" education of Aboriginal peoples and took

[13] Sir John A. Macdonald commissioned Nicolas Davin, a newspaper journalist and politician, to write this report on industrial schools for Aboriginal students as established in the United States. The document is commonly referred to as the Davin Report.

responsibility for the daily management and operations for the schools, which in essence meant "civilizing", moralizing, and ultimately assimilating them into mainstream society (Furniss, 1995).

Following the recommendation of the *Davin Report*, the importance of denominational schools at the outset for the Indians became obvious:

> The first and greatest stone in the foundation of the quasi-civilization of the Indians, wherever seen, was laid by missionaries . . . Schools are scattered over the whole continent, wherever Indians exist, monuments of religious zeal and heroic self-sacrifice. These schools should be utilized as much as possible, both on the grounds of efficiency and economy. . . .
>
> One of the earliest things an attempt to civilize them does, is to take away their simple Indian mythology, the central idea of which, to wit, a perfect spirit, can hardly be improved on. . . . a savage sceptic would be open to civilizing influences and moral control only through desires, which, in the midst of enlightenment, constantly break out into the worst features of barbarians. (Davin, 1879, pp. 12, 14-15)

This assimilative policy officially marks the first phase of Canada's "Indian" education policy (Assembly of First Nations, *Breaking the Silence*, 1994).

However, Barman challenges this rhetoric and argues that historically through the institutionalization of residential schools, Aboriginal children were schooled primarily for inequality and hence failure, not necessarily for assimilation as initially espoused and decreed. Barman (1995) claims that the federal policy of assimilating the Aboriginal peoples failed mostly because the system was "fundamentally flawed" (p. 57).

First, as wards of the federal government, Aboriginal peoples were not only essentialized but were objectified and marginalized as a uniformed "Other". Premised in biological determinism, the rhetoric and reality both assumed racial inferiority as history textbooks consistently depicted Aboriginal peoples as "wild", "savage", "cruel", and "uncivilized" (see Decore et al., 1981; Werner et al., 1980).

Second, Aboriginal students received less time in the classroom than non-Aboriginal students and were grossly underfunded when compared to provincial institutions or even to the bare basics of survival (Milloy, 2001; Barman, 1995). The goal was only basic literacy (Persson, 1986), as Aboriginal students were to acquire the "practical skills permitting their entry into mainstream society, but only at its very lowest rungs", thus reinforcing the status

quo (Barman, 1995, p. 63). As residential schools remained under the control of various Christian denominations, one other focus was on religious conversion rather than "academic" education. Though the rhetoric championed Aboriginal peoples to assimilate into "mainstream" society, the reality was one of restriction and, in effect, prevention: "However much federal rhetoric might have maintained the illusion of assimilation, the Department of Indian Affairs was assuring failure in terms of Aboriginal pupils competing socially or intellectually with their White neighbours" (pp. 63-64).

Third, mainstream society refused to accept educated young Indians into the dominant socio-economic order, and thus segregation and inequality became the norm across Canada (Barman, 1995). The rhetoric of assimilation shifted to one of isolation and discrimination whereby the reality quickly paralleled the rhetoric. Barman (1995) argues that the policy of assimilation ironically became an "undesirable outcome" that threatened the status quo (p. 353) -- in essence, rhetoric becoming reality. Instead, only through inequality would Aboriginal peoples "attain" their respective place on the racialized hierarchy of mainstream society of that time.

In a more critical and comprehensive analysis of residential schools, Milloy (2001) asserts that the school system's failure was complete and immediate. This educational colonialism became a "national crime" with culturally genocidal consequences (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003). Marker (2004) echoes this sentiment and argues that the residential school in effect was a "dark experiment" which was "deployed to replace the Aboriginal child's actual identity, language, and connection to the land with a shadow personality that would serve the interests of mainstream economic and cultural goals toward colonial dominance" (p. 103).

The beginnings of integration marks the second phase of Aboriginal residential schooling in Canada, extending between 1951 and 1972. Integration of Aboriginal students into mainstream schools from the early 1950s meant decreased influence and involvement of Christian denominations and, inversely, increased influence and involvement of public (secular) administration. Teachers were now employees of the federal government, academic curricula were standardized to those of public schools, and half-day work / half-day study began to disappear. Milloy (2001) makes an important point in stating that

> integration was inspired by financial rather than philosophical first principles. Philosophy there was, but it came as an afterthought, and even then it was not well thought out. Its rhetoric was at times contradicted by the very details of the new education policy.
>
> Education remained assimilation. . . . the new hallmark of post-war assimilative rhetoric was "citizenship." Integrated education would . . . prepare Indian children to take their place as citizens. (p. 195)

The *Hawthorn Report* in 1967 described the ideal "Indian" child / student as a "middle-class Canadian child" where "teachers must 'continue to take refuge in the 'rightness' of their ways and struggle onward in the task of 'helping children overcome their Indianness" (as cited in Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003, pp. 56, 57). In essence, the *Hawthorn Report* was "framed around ethnocentric propositions that were hidden by a discourse of progress and mobility" despite the report's politically astute terminology and attempt to be "culturally sensitive and somewhat self-reflective" (p. 56). In the process, the *Hawthorn Report* effectually condemned Aboriginal culture.

Symbolically and politically epitomizing the integrationist philosophy, the proposed 1969 federal Indian policy -- *White Paper on Indian Policy* -- proposed the "equality" of Aboriginal peoples in Canada:

> To be an Indian is to lack power -- the power to act as owner of your lands, the power to spend your own money and, too often, the power to change your own conditions. . . . Special treatment has made of the Indians a community disadvantaged and apart.
>
> Obviously, the course of history must be changed.
>
> To be an Indian must be to be free -- free to develop Indian cultures in an environment of legal, social and economic equality with other Canadians. (Federal Government of Canada, 1969, p. 3)

The policy was premised on the "achievement of individual Indian equality at the expense of cultural survival" (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986, p. 15). The Canadian government proposed that the Department of Indian Affairs be abolished and the reserve system dismantled. Aboriginal peoples as individuals would become equal participants in a "just society". Despite its integrationist philosophy and rhetoric of equality and justice, the *White Paper* in reality proposed the "most complete expression of Canada's traditional assimilative intent" (Milloy, 2001, p. 190), which would effectively abolish not only the special status of Aboriginal peoples but also terminate the federal government's "responsibility" to protect

and uphold this constitutional right (Longboat, 1987). However, it would also be the impetus for the resurgence and reawakening of Aboriginal peoples' political and social consciousness in Canada. The consequence would be a third phase from 1972 onwards in the continuing and evolving journey toward self-determination.[14]

Despite all the policy changes and philosophical rhetoric of the federal government, the reality of residential schools remained firmly and fundamentally rooted in a colonial vision. As Henderson (1995) states: "Federal government regulations were not benign intrusions; they were deliberate psychological experiments which attempted to destroy First Nations consciousness" (p. 254). The legacy has also become more personalized with a growing number of poignant accounts from former students and "survivors" of the colonial education system.

Colonization: The Legacy of Residential Schools

The legacy of residential schools for Aboriginal peoples is unparalleled to any group in Canadian history. No other peoples in Canada experienced such a coercively prolonged systemic subjugation and oppression. The legacy of residential schools has forever touched and essentially threatened and disrupted (and in some cases, destroyed) the Aboriginal peoples' ways of life: language and culture, identity, sense of place, and Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning.

Language and Culture

Language, in all its various forms (written, verbal, non-verbal, symbolic), is the soul of a people's culture. It becomes the most critical vehicle of cultural transmission through which culture is accumulated, shared, and carried on from one generation to another (Milloy, 2001). Kirkness (1998) provides some tragic statistics: of the more than sixty Aboriginal languages once spoken in Canada, eight are already extinct, thirteen are near extinction, twenty-three are "seriously endangered" (p. 95), and at the present rate of decline, only four are projected to have a reasonable chance of survival -- Cree, Ojibwa, Inuktitut, and Dakota.

---

[14] This third phase will be discussed later in this chapter under "Decolonization: A Journey Toward Self-Determination".

In her article, "Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation", Battiste (1986) argues that teaching and enforcing an English language education to Aboriginal students was not only disruptive to Aboriginal cultures but was cognitively imperialistic: it "became the tool of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim tribal knowledge and values" that resulted in the "destruction of tribal identity and values along with the tribal soul" (p. 37).[15] Thus, accompanying the declining and dying Aboriginal languages were the declining and dying Aboriginal cultures and identities:

> This means that a student's personhood is devalued, he or she disconnects from the attributes that assist in the development of self-respect, confidence, and the ability to trust oneself and others. This rift is the insidious tool of disenfranchisement, because the student is not only told he or she is unacceptable; the student now feels inferior and rejected. (Doige, 2003, p. 126)

Well-documented testimonies attest to the suppression of Aboriginal students' language, cultural beliefs and practices, and identity in residential schools, which often and tragically resulted in physical, mental, and emotional abuses.[16]

Identity

Identity for Aboriginal peoples was seriously compromised and even jeopardized as a result of residential schooling. The physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual trauma experienced by Aboriginal students left an indelible mark on their identity, both individually and collectively.

Physical abuses included malnutrition, inadequate clothing, punishment and/or discipline, and, most damaging and profound, sexual violence (Assembly of First Nations, 1994). Exceptionally high rates of mortality were also common (Kelm, 1996). Mental abuses included verbal discouragement and suppression of Aboriginal traits or customs, and verbal belittling. Emotional abuses included humiliation, isolation, and alienation. Spiritual abuses included denial, devaluation, and denigration of traditional ceremonies and practices

---

[15] See "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society" in an edited collection by Battiste: Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision (2000).

[16] For only a small sample of such testimonies, see Furniss (1992), Knockwood and Thomas (1992), Chrisjohn, Young, and Marun (1997), Assembly of First Nations (1994), Milloy (2001), and Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003). Detailing individual testimonies and experiences, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

(Assembly of First Nations, 1994). As a legacy of residential schooling, Aboriginal peoples lost generations where "survivors" of such abuses felt displaced, silenced, and alone. They were taught, and perhaps learned too well, to hate themselves and their culture. Consultants working for the Assembly of First Nations detailed the "social pathologies" produced by the school system:

> The residential school led to a disruption in the transference of parenting skills from one generation to the next. Without these skills, many survivors had difficulties in raising their own children. In residential schools they learned that adults often exert power and control through abuse. The lessons learned in childhood are often repeated in adulthood with the result that many survivors of the residential school system often inflict abuse on their own children. These children in turn use the same tools on their own children. (as cited in Milloy, 2001, p. 299)[17]

Thus, a vicious cycle began -- one of abuse and neglect. Other common responses among Aboriginal peoples included "depression, inappropriate or limited forms of expression, running away, frustration and substance abuse" (Milloy, 2001, p. 95). Even more tragic was the burdened and fragmented identity they carried as adults after residential schooling: "The search for identity was the greatest challenge for many. The painful and repeated denigration of their way of life, including the banning of their language, had left former students with little or no sense of what constituted being a First Nations person" (p. 105). A "survivor" of residential schooling poignantly and eloquently states this perspective:

> It makes me angry that the people who almost destroyed me got away with it because they grew old and died before I could confront them. My anger led to frustration because there is nothing I could do to even things up. I cannot confront those who lied to me about myself and about my people and withheld knowledge from me which could have allowed me to live up to my fullest potential. (as cited in Knockwood & Thomas, 1992, p. 158)

The legacy continues:

> The spirits of many First Nations people remain lost and wandering as a result of the people's experiences in residential school. This loss has not only affected the survivors of residential school. Their children, partners, extended families and communities have all been impacted in some way. Some have been able to reaffirm their identity . . . [Others], however, are still lost and searching. (Assembly of First Nations, 1994, p. 108)

---

[17] Further reading would include Ing's PhD Dissertation, "Dealing with Shame and Unresolved Trauma" (2000).

Sense of Place

By relocating and, in essence, dislocating Aboriginal children to residential schools, Aboriginal cultures and languages were purposefully and physically removed from them, thus cutting cultural transmission. For Eurocentric education to be transplanted and transformed into residential schools, the place where education occurs is theoretically and practically inconsequential (except being physically isolated from Aboriginal communities). However, for Aboriginal peoples, the place of education is inextricably and fundamentally linked with its location (i.e., sense of place/location): "Indian education recognizes the importance of an Indian sense of place, land, and territory. From this point of view, it is clear that a uniquely Indian place promotes involvement rather than isolation or segregation" (Hampton, 1995, p. 40).

Smith (1999) uses the term "space" to point out the difference between Western and Indigenous knowledge:

> For the indigenous world, Western conceptions of space, of arrangements and display, of the relationship between people and the landscape, of culture as an object of study, have meant that not only has the indigenous world been represented in particular ways back to the West, but the indigenous world view, the land and the people, have been radically transformed in the spatial image of the West. In other words, indigenous space has been colonized. (p. 51)[18]

By breaking ties to the land, residential schools severed the connection to Aboriginal knowledge and ways of life. Aboriginal students instead faced an alien and alienating school culture, one that inevitably would lead them to "failure". The legacy of this disjuncture would further exacerbate the loss of identity and culture.

Indigenous Knowledge and Ways of Learning

With Western education forced upon Aboriginal peoples, Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning were "illegitimized" and ignored. From a holistic to a fragmented and compartmentalized approach, Aboriginal students' ways of learning and knowing were abruptly suppressed (see Archibald, 1995; Joe, 2000). Educationally, the legacy of

---

[18] The term "Indigenous" usually refers to Aboriginal people internationally and therefore connotes a more global context (see Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Communication Branch, 2002).

residential schools stunted the development of Aboriginal peoples -- spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, and academically.

With only basic knowledge for assimilative purposes, Aboriginal students were mostly trained not for academic pursuits but for "practical" skills and "Christian" theology and values (Barman, 1995; Persson, 1986; Doige, 2003). A gross lack of qualified teachers, funding, and academic supervision along with an inordinate time devoted to chores systemically reduced the educational potential of Aboriginal peoples (Milloy, 2001). As a result, the federal educational system "left the average First Nations student with only seven years of formal education" (Henderson, 1995, p. 255), thus schooled for marginalized occupations and even unemployment in mainstream society. Arguably, residential schooling was used as a "class weapon" in which "the culture of poverty mentality that framed government and church thinking drew on education to create a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby poor children from poor families could not possibly succeed in educational institutions built upon middle-class parochial values and temporal demands" (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003, pp. 61-62).

Though most residential schools officially closed by the late 1980s, their legacy remains and is still unfolding. Wounds still need to be addressed and healed. With the resurgence of Aboriginal peoples' political empowerment in the 1970s a shift in perspective from a colonized to a decolonizing history began -- one of self-discovery, self-preservation, and self-determination.

Decolonization: A Journey Toward Self-Determination

Responding to the federal government's *White Paper,* the National Indian Brotherhood published their policy paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972), a historically profound and significant document outlining Aboriginal peoples' concerns and vision for their own education. Laying the groundwork for the future of Aboriginal education, the document called for "education to provide the setting in which [Aboriginal] children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honoured place in Indian tradition and culture" (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, p. 2). Another aim was to "make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people . . . to give [their] children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability" (p. 3).

More specifically, the purpose of "Indian" education was defined as "salvaging Aboriginal languages, cultures, and societies, and of transmitting those cultures, with their unique understanding of North American ecology and their distinctive world views" (Battiste, 1995, pp. viii-ix). In order to achieve these goals, the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) challenged the rights to and ownership of educational voice and authority. Because the federal government had grossly failed Aboriginal students educationally, the National Indian Brotherhood believed that "Indian parents must have FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION" (p. 27). Since this historical document was published, "Indian" education has experienced continual renewal both philosophically and practically.

Philosophically, Aboriginal education begins with Indigenous knowledge/epistemology, grounded in the "self, the spirit, the unknown" (Hampton, 1995, p. 108) and is centred in space and place, not time or history:

> [All] life is sacred and that all life forms are connected. Humans are neither above nor below others in the circle of life. Everything that exists in the circle is one unity, of one heart. . . . Aboriginal knowledge is not a description of reality but an understanding of the processes of ecological change and ever-changing insights about diverse patterns or styles of flux. (Henderson, 2000, pp. 259, 265).

Thus, Indigenous knowledge is not static but is dynamically interrelated and interconnected to specific places. Education consequentially needs to emphasize how knowledge comes from a concrete place where the "'Indian relationship to the land is not abstract, but very particular, tied to one piece of ground'" (as cited in Marker, 2000, p. 41). Battiste and Henderson (2000) argue that

> Eurocentric thought demands universal definitions of Indigenous knowledge, even though Indigenous scholars have established no common usage of the term. The quest for precision and certainty is a typical Eurocentric strategy. . . . This is the strategy of a language system that is not attached to an ecology or to its intelligible essences. . . . [Researchers] have tried to make Indigenous knowledge match the existing academic categories of Eurocentric knowledge. They have relied on these categories for comfort and security, instead of embarking on an intellectual adventure to connect more deeply with Indigenous ecologies. (pp. 36, 39)

Battiste and Henderson (2000) both acknowledge that Indigenous ways of knowing "is the way of living within [the] contexts of flux, paradox, and tension, respecting the pull of

dualism and reconciling opposing forces" (p. 42). Furthermore, a disconnect appears to exist between Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge: while Indigenous epistemology is experiential, natural, and holistic, Western epistemology is objectified, artificial, and compartmentalized (Henderson, 2000; Kawagley and Barnhardt, 1999).[19]

In the case of studying history, Bruno-Jofre and Schiralli (2002) emphasize the product of knowledge and argue that "content knowledge and mastery of the subject matter [are] critical in the inquiry model. . . . The emphasis on stressing the process of general thinking skills in history classrooms may effectively displace genuine historical content" (p. 121). From an Indigenous viewpoint, however, their sense of history becomes narrowly Eurocentric. In contrast, Ermine (1995) claims that the

> fragmentary self-world view that permeates the Western world is detrimental to Aboriginal epistemology. The Western education systems that our children are subjected to promote the dogma of fragmentation and indelibly harm the capacity for holism. The mindset created by fragmentation impedes the progress towards inwardness that our ancestors undertook. Only through subjectivity may we continue to gain authentic insights into truth. We need to experience the life force from which creativity flows, and our Aboriginal resources such as language and culture are our touchstones for achieving this. (p. 110)

More important than these differences is the fundamental awareness that "beyond the immediate sensible world of perception, memory, imagination, and feelings lies another world which knowledge, power, or medicine is derived" (Battiste, 1998, p. 18). This awareness of Indigenous epistemology in turn becomes a force of survival and empowerment for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Aboriginal education continues to evolve and redefine itself in order for Indigenous knowledge/epistemology to be legitimized. Once central to the National Indian Brotherhood, Indian control over Indian education no longer suffices. A process of decolonization has begun in a journey toward self-determination for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Decolonization, according to Laenui, is a long yet necessary process. Aboriginal peoples need to rediscover their history and recover their languages, cultures, and identities. After, they need to mourn their losses and sufferings from the colonial past. They then need

---

[19] The apparent incongruities between Western and Indigenous knowledges are expanded further in Kawagley and Barnhardt's article, "Education Indigenous to Place: Western Science Meets Native Reality" (1999).

to dream through exploring their own cultures, experiencing their own aspirations, and considering their own structures of government and social order. Finally, they need to be proactive by making their dreams a reality (Laenui, 2000). In "proacting", Aboriginal peoples are moving toward a postcolonial framework, one that not only revitalizes Aboriginal ways of life but also challenges the conventions and structures of a Eurocentrically hegemonic education system. According to Henderson (2000), Eurocentrism "represents a cognitive force of artificial European thought, a differentiated consciousness, ever changing in its creativity to justify the oppression and domination of contemporary Indigenous peoples and their spiritual guardians" (p. 59). The new forms of colonization create an illusion that colonization is no longer practiced; however, they have instead been reformed in different and subtler ways (Smith, 2000). Because the national legislature and policy makers "make decisions for Indigenous peoples, tell them what they can and cannot do, refuse to support them, or effectively shut them out of the process" (Yazzie, 2000, p. 46), Aboriginal peoples are still living in the legacy of colonialism. Decolonization will remain a process and a postcolonial era will remain an elusive dream until self-determination is achieved. However, decolonization does not imply a complete rejection of Western knowledge; rather, it is about "centering [Indigenous] concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from [Indigenous] perspectives and for [Indigenous] purposes" (Smith, 1999, p. 39).

Practically, one fundamental goal of "Indian" education is control -- political, financial, personnel, and, perhaps most important, curricular (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987). A decolonized education not only includes Aboriginal peoples' control of their own education but also the affirmation and transformation of and for their own peoples.

Archibald (1995), in her case study of the Stó:lo people, outlines three main objectives that, although specific to a place, may be used for Aboriginal education, echoing the ideas of affirmation and transformation. The first objective is to help Aboriginal students develop a more positive self-image. The second objective is to help non-Aboriginal students' need to develop an increased awareness of and a more positive attitude toward Aboriginal peoples. The third objective is to provide students with the opportunity to make a comparison of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal cultures, focusing on "culture change, social organization, technology, child-rearing, language, and world-view" (p. 301).

Similarly, Hampton (1995) comprehensively offers twelve standards / objectives on which practical Aboriginal education is redefined and refocused:

1. Respect the spiritual relationships between all things.
2. Serve people.
3. Actively implement diverse cultures.
4. Validate First Nations culture.
5. Continue First Nations traditions.
6. Demand relationships of personal respect.
7. Acknowledge a colonial history.
8. Relentlessly battle for First Nations children.
9. Recognize and even nourish the powerful pattern of life that lies hidden within personal and tribal suffering and oppression.
10. Recognize conflict, tensions, and struggle between Western and Indigenous education.
11. Recognize the importance of an "Indian" sense of place, land, and territory.
12. Transform the relations between First Nations and non-First Nations as well as in the individual society.

This decolonized typology places a priority on the quest for sovereignty, the recognition and legitimization of Indigenous knowledge as the epistemological foundation, the Earth as a spiritual centre, and the continuation and evolution of tribal and traditional ways of life as sociocultural frames of reference.[20]

Both the philosophical and practical aims of Aboriginal education are heading toward a postcolonial approach; however, challenges also lie ahead. Politically, and most problematic because of its paradoxical nature, Aboriginal peoples are seeking to have the federal government provide funds for quality education while they are still seeking to end the federal government's control of them (Longboat, 1987). Structurally and administratively, the Department of Indian Affairs was not designed to operate or administer schools: "The relatively low funding levels of federal schools, and their geographical separation, have meant that the department does not provide services equivalent to those offered by local school boards. Nor does the department have the specialized infrastructure provided by provincial education ministries to support local boards" (Longboat, 1987, p. 35). Socially,

[20] Although a growing body of research has been published on education programs for Aboriginal students (see Williams & Wyatt, 1987; Hesh, 1995; Grant, 1995), not much has been studied on education programs for non-Aboriginal students about Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal education is not only education for and of Aboriginal peoples. It is arguably even more important for non-Aboriginal people to learn about Aboriginal peoples. Because little has been taught in schools about Aboriginal peoples, most Canadians know little about them. Even more detrimental are the "erroneous and blatantly ethnocentric" media exposures of Aboriginal peoples in film, print, and on television (Douglas, 1987, p. 184). Philosophically, potential harm exists in codifying Indigenous knowledge too firmly, thus essentializing it. Rooted in diversity and in practical activity and social relationships rather than abstractions separate from the learner or knower, Indigenous knowledge does not and cannot fit into preconceived notions of culture (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Though seemingly insurmountable, these challenges do poignantly illustrate the continual growth and depth of Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal education. From oppression and even threat of extinction, Aboriginal peoples have struggled, contested, persisted, and survived. Too long have Aboriginal voices been silenced, muted, or ignored; through the process of decolonization, however, are they finally being heard, listened to, and validated.

From a more practical level, the federal government passed Bill C-34 -- First Nations Jurisdiction over Education in British Columbia Act -- in December 2006, which formally recognizes the Aboriginal right to make decisions about education from K-12. In essence, this federal and provincial acknowledgement is a step toward Aboriginal epistemology as it validates and provides Aboriginal peoples to have influence and control over the education of their children if they choose; however, the initial phase is the jurisdiction over on-reserve, K-12 First Nations schools (BC Ministry of Education, 2007b). BC's provincial government has also initiated over the recent years Enhancement Agreements between the Ministry of Education, school districts, and local Aboriginal communities. They are designed to "enhance the educational achievement of Aboriginal students" through a "collaborative partnership between Aboriginal communities and school districts that involves shared decision-making and setting specific goals to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students" and "integration of Aboriginal perspectives into learning experiences" (BC Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 8). In 2007, Surrey's School District drafted an Enhancement Agreement with a number of purposes:

1. Build on the established practice of shared decision-making between the Surrey School District and local Aboriginal people.
2. Acknowledge, respect and affirm relationships between the local Aboriginal communities, parents and the Surrey School District to enhance Aboriginal student success.
3. Continually enhance the academic performance of Aboriginal students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
4. Continue to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners by maintaining and expanding academic support programs as necessary while providing staffing and transportation that support these programs.
5. Ensure the collection of data through formal and informal assessments, which measure student achievement in the selected performance areas. (Surrey School District, 2007, p. 1)

In addition, the district identified two main performance goals: to enhance the achievement of Aboriginal learners form Kindergarten to Grade 12 in literacy and engagement; and to enhance the communication and relationships between the Surrey School District and the Aboriginal communities and parents (Surrey School District, 2007, pp. 2, 4).[21] These practical initiatives reflect real progress and movement in addressing the needs and hopes of Aboriginal peoples in their journey toward real self-determination.

Aboriginal Images and Representations in Texts

> When we speak of education, it is not only meant that the Aboriginal person must become better educated in the non-Aboriginal school of thought. The non-Aboriginal person must be made aware of our history, our traditional lifestyle and the downfall and resurgence of our peoples as history has evolved today. This information must become a compulsory component in the teaching of all Canadians. (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1996)

Cited from the *Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples*, this quotation reflects upon the legacy of Canada's colonial history and voices a profound concern over the education of and for students and teachers alike. Historically, Canada's "story" has been a narration of conquest, focusing on English/French relations and their resulting domination and colonization; however, some historians have recently challenged this traditional canon

[21] The document also includes a breakdown of specific objectives and corresponding performance indicators and performance targets for each goal.

with the inclusion of once ignored and even scorned peoples -- women, ethnic minorities, and Aboriginal peoples. In particular, Chief David Ahenakew echoes this sentiment and criticizes the biases against Aboriginal peoples found in history textbooks:

> Have you read your child's history book lately? What do they say about the First Nations? You will usually encounter them in the first chapter, after which they conveniently disappear from sight as a succession of white discoverers and explorers pass in parade. About us you will find quotations such as this, "They fought more ferociously than any other Indians we encountered in our westward movement." The fact we were fighting for our own land and survival was not mentioned. (as cited in House of Commons, 1984, p. 126)

Through both omission and commission, school textbooks have traditionally silenced Aboriginal peoples' voices. Moreover, as Orlowski and Menzies (2004) argue:

> Many of the Social Studies and History textbooks read by British Columbian students remained locked in a colonialist discourse of European arrival and hard working settlers who, by dint of their hard work built the nation we now call Canada. Within the dominant narrative Indigenous peoples are rarely presented as actors in their own right: history acts upon them and they are usually represented as passive recipients, or occasionally, as reactors to what the dominant culture is doing. (p. 66)

However, as Canada constitutionally espouses the notions of inclusion, textbooks should reflect these tenets in addressing and hence redressing Aboriginal peoples.

Textbooks as Collective History and Memory

Because of their ubiquitous presence in the classroom that "have formed, and continue to form, the basis of instruction", textbooks have been "central to the quality and content of education" (Clark, 1996, p. 7). Although textbooks are not the only means of transmitting a nation's history, they have effectively become a "universal medium" and "foundation of school instruction" that potentially mold the "knowledge, attitudes and values of our young people. Ultimately, [textbooks] can reflect and shape the beliefs and actions of the nation itself. The value of their content for classroom use cannot be understated" (McCluskey, 1993, p. 3). As a result, within their particular sociocultural context of "demographic, social, political, and economic conditions, traditions, and ideologies" (Cornbleth, 1990, p. 31), textbooks serve three main purposes.

First, textbooks link national memory with national history. Since memory depends on social conditions, it is not an objective fact. The memories of a nation (i.e., collective memory) constitute the "accepted perceptions of past events in which the collective identity of a people is mirrored" (Adam, 2000, p. 88) and, in turn, are constructed and reconstructed, interpreted and reinterpreted over time. National memories are thus temporal and dynamic: "Our memories are pure to us in that moment, but they are not necessarily a direct route back into the past. Because we often accept the fallibility of our own memories, we attempt to aid remembrance by gathering images and other materials of those things we deem to be relevant to our lives" (Kavanagh, 2000, p. 19).

Reflexively, Francis (1997) provides another perspective as memory implies its opposite -- forgetfulness: "As a community we forget as much as we remember, and what we choose to forget tells as much about us as what we choose to remember" (p. 11). This elusiveness becomes fixed contextually and temporarily through textbooks as these recorded memories become documents of and for "history": "Textbooks thus function as a sort of 'supreme historical court' whose task is to decipher from all the accumulated 'pieces of the past' the 'true' collective memories which are appropriate for inclusion in the canonical national historical narrative" (Podeh, 2000, p. 66). As such, textbooks may be contested in terms of their content, interpretation, and perspective. In constructing the collective memory, textbooks play a dual role: "on the one hand, they provide a sense of continuity between the past and the present, transmitting accepted historical narratives; on the other, they alter -- or rewrite -- the past in order to suit contemporary needs" (p. 66). In essence, they become "artifacts of historical commemoration" (Coates and Morgan, 2002, p. 167) and remain "fascinating not because they explain what actually happened to us, but because they explain what we think happened to us" (Francis, 1997, p. 14).

In addition to the text, visual images, especially photographs, play a role in manufacturing memory. They constitute a "meta-value of memory construction, [their] tentacles spread out, blurring and constructing memory", and, in essence, they become "objects of memory" (Edwards, 1999, p. 221). As photographs provide a snapshot of history in textbooks, they are made to "hold the fleeing, to still time, to create memory" with intention (p. 222). They have a profound effect on the interpretation of historical events and people. However, because they are "detached from physical nature and consequently from

the functional context", meaning has to be provided within the text in order for viewers to understand (p. 225). Thus, when incorporating visual images in textbooks, the accompanying texts become as important as the images themselves. As Werner (2002) argues, readers do not passively receive meaning from the visual images but interpret them:

> [Readers] make meaning by understanding how the parts (e.g., symbols, conventions, context) are related to the whole (e.g., message). . . . Visual texts are more than 'things' or instructional means set before students; their meanings emerge during interactions with readers (viewers). To think of images independent of readers is naïve, for they do not speak apart from interpreters. . . . Understanding is not simply a matter of grouping an author's intended meaning or of uncovering the correct message . . . but also of bringing one's imagination to the reading, recognizing that varying interpretations are possible as the text is engaged from different purposes and biographical locations. (pp. 403, 404-405).[22]

Teachers should, in turn, direct and teach students how to analyze and interpret (i.e., to deconstruct) the various meanings behind the visual images.

Second, textbooks become both politicizing and socializing instruments. Not only are textbooks often used as "ideological tools to promote a certain belief system and legitimize an established political and social order" (Podeh, 2000, p. 66), they are ideologically driven: they are "always influenced to some degree by the value system and the knowledge level of the writer" (Devine, 1991, p. 12). With this role, textbooks reflect, reshape, and even redefine national identification(s) and identity(ies). According to Coates and Morgan (2002), textbooks historically "have been vehicles used to inculcate and develop national identity. The 'story' of Canada's past was often the imagined and desired narrative of [its] future" (p. 164).

Furthermore, as Clark (2002) states, even with the goals of objectivity, the content in textbooks is inherently biased through their inclusion and hence exclusion of particular events and peoples. Issues of elitism, racism, and prejudice become inextricably bound in textbooks by simply ignoring the existence of those who are different: "By failing to recognize particular groups of people they are stigmatized as the 'other' and are stripped of the dignity they deserve. Failure to recognize the existence of the "other" is to cast aspersions on them and to insinuate that they carry no inherent value as a people (Ashley &

---

[22] See also Werner's article "Reading Authorship Into Texts" (2000).

Jarratt-Ziemski, 1999, p. 50). In turn, the issues of voice and viewpoint become problematic to historians: whose voices and whose viewpoints are presented and re-presented become points of contention. Because historians have authority over the past, they "determine which voices of the past are heard through their expositions and thus which viewpoints are represented in their discourses" (Berkhofer Jr., 1995, p. 170). Values, morals, and norms of mainstream society are also usually reflected in textbooks while those of non- (or even anti-) mainstream are usually omitted. In effect, textbooks normalize what is accepted and marginalize what is contested.

Third, textbooks serve as practical pedagogy. They have, as both Tomkins (1986) and Hirschfelder (1999) claim, become the universal norm in the classroom and main determinant of curriculum. Textbooks approved at the ministry and district levels and used in schools by teachers and students often constitute authority simply because of their endorsement and validations by the former, and as such they consequentially become the primary source of knowledge for the latter (Clark, 1996; Seixas, 1994).

An Overview of Textbook Evaluations

Since the federal government's publication of its *White Paper on Indian Policy* (1969), various institutions conducted surveys regarding public attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples.[23] Researched and published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, three main reports show an overwhelmingly ambiguous position (Cooke, 1984; Gibbins and Ponting, 1978; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), 1980).[24] Gibbins and Ponting (1978) discovered in their national survey of 1,832 people that the general public did not regard Aboriginal peoples as a "high priority" nor were they "well-informed about Indian affairs" (p. 37). Seen indifferently and even "unquestionably pejorative" with negative stereotypes, a sizable minority of non-Aboriginal people viewed Aboriginal peoples as inferior: "In this sense, Indians are seen as lazy, lacking in motivation, factionalized, overly dependent upon

---

[23] Most of the studies regarding the perceptions, attitudes, and images of Aboriginal peoples were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly as a reaction to the White Paper, the resurgence of the Assembly of First Nations as a political voice, and the recognition and growth of the human rights / "minority" movements (Cooke, 1984). However, fewer of these national public surveys were conducted in the 1990s as focus appeared to have shifted toward other Aboriginal issues such as the environment, Canadian constitution, and land claims.

[24] Within Cooke's and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's publications are other cited studies regarding the perceptions and images of Aboriginal peoples.

government handouts, and facing serious problems with the use of alcohol" (p. 11). These sentiments echo Bradford's previous yet much smaller sampled study that was published in the INAC report (1980).[25] Recommending further research, intercultural workshops, sensitivity training sessions, information dissemination, and community projects, Bradford concluded that the public did not hold overly-positive feelings toward Aboriginal peoples:

1. A resigned despair of pessimism as "latent prejudice, apathy, and ignorance" dominated their attitudes.
2. A fragile sympathy conditioned upon "no cost ... for the non-native".
3. A fear of attracting "hostility" by "heightening the profile of Indian matters".
4. An incompatibility between "non-native approaches to research and policy/planning" with "Indian tradition".
5. A positive yet vulnerable attitudinal change.
6. A reserved tension as "current inward hostility is likely to be directed outwards" in the future. (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1980, pp. 5, 6)

Underlying both these studies were the pervasive negative and arguably intolerant and racist sentiments among non-Aboriginals toward Aboriginals at that time.

Following these studies, in her 1984 review of contemporary research of Aboriginal images, Cooke concluded that non-Aboriginal people had accepted an uneasy dichotomous image of Aboriginal peoples but she remained optimistic: "sometimes ambivalent, sometimes contradictory. . . . Indians are viewed as somehow symbolic of Canada, in part perhaps in recognition of their aboriginal status, in part because as a reminder of, or even a search for, a 'heroic' past" (p. 65). No longer viewed as politically and socially accepted descriptors, terms such as "heathen", "barbarian", "pagan", and "savage" have mostly disappeared from public discourse. Yet despite having a more positive image, Aboriginal peoples were still seen as the "Other" and "peripheral to 'real' Canadian history" (Cooke, 1984, p. 31; see Werner et al., 1980; and Walker, 1983), which were reflected and reinforced in the school textbooks.

Along with the studies on public opinions and perceptions of Aboriginal peoples were a number of textbook reviews, conducted to see what students were learning (and hence taught) about Aboriginal peoples. The methodology varied as some studies quantitatively

---

[25] Bradford used 37 interviews in "public and private places from Ontario to Alberta, with non-Natives having a considerable awareness of Indian affairs" (INAC, 1980, p. 5).

used word counts (McDiarmid and Pratt, 1971; Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, 1974; O'Neill, 1984), while most qualitatively used subjective themes (Indian & Métis Conference Committee of the Community Welfare Planning Council, 1964; Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1974; Kirkness, 1977; Berkhofer Jr., 1979; Decore et al., 1981).

Studies in the 1960s

At the Seventh Annual Indian and Métis Conference (1961), Aboriginal peoples voiced their concerns over their portrayal in textbooks and later concluded that most of the school texts tended to "promote patronizing and degrading attitudes", be "harmful to the Indian child's sense of racial dignity", and "deal inaccurately with Indian life" (Indian & Métis Conference Committee, 1964, p. 1). In response, they resolved to have "such school textbooks discontinued as they are patronizing and degrading to Indians and to have new textbooks or revisions dealing with Indian life written with accuracy and sympathetic treatment" (p. 1). The conference committee only surveyed five Canadian history textbooks used in Manitoba elementary schools. Though they concluded that treatment of Aboriginal peoples in the textbooks did improve over the ones a generation ago, there was still much to be done:

> There are startling errors of omission as well as commission; the ancient Indian religious beliefs are always contemptuously dismissed; the authors find it necessary to repeatedly point out the lack of cleanliness of the wigwams and the food while more important virtues go ignored; and once we reach the period of Confederation there creeps in that smug paternalism that so undermines Indian pride and imposes on him either lethargy or a destructive resentment. (p. 1)

However, a limitation on this particular study is the minute number of textbooks examined, which would not accurately describe or make generalizable to the remaining history textbooks used in the Manitoba school system. Nonetheless, the committee argued that the treatment accorded to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada in the history textbooks was still unsatisfactory:

> That these people have long been misunderstood, misrepresented and their contributions overlooked . . . The frequent derogatory presentation of a segment of [the Aboriginal] population has had a devastating effect upon those so pictured, and to some extent has reflected upon the rest of the [Aboriginal peoples] who have far too readily accepted it. (p. 18)

The report concludes with a passionate criticism of the history textbooks in general: "To picture [Aboriginal Peoples] as fierce and predatory savages; as simple and innocent sub-humans; or even just to ignore them as much as possible may make it easier for us to accept their many tragedies, but if history is to serve the future, such presentations are as impractical as they are immoral" (p. 18).

Two other surveys were also completed in the 1960s that reviewed history textbooks used in Ontario. Sluman (1966), who was on the committee for the Manitoba survey, also surveyed Ontario textbooks and concludes that they were more objective and complete than those reviewed in the Manitoba survey.[26] She claims that some authors "point out the courage and ingenuity with which the Indians coped with their environment. . . . Without exception, every book reviewed provides some evidence, at one point or another, of sympathy and understanding for Indian people" (Sluman, 1966, pp. 11, 12). In another review of Ontario's Grades 1 to 8 Social Studies textbooks, the conclusion is not as optimistic (Study Group on the Canadian Indian and Eskimo of Port Credit University Women's Club, 1966). The study reviewed 36 textbooks and was based on answering a series of questions on three topics: i) the original culture of Canadian Indians; ii) the history of culture contact between Indians and non-Indians in Canada; and iii) the situation of the Canadian Indian today (Vanderburgh, 1966, p. 2). The report concludes that there were some

> enormous omissions in the information of Canadian Indians . . . The original social and political organization of the various Indians groups is not adequately covered, and there [was] almost no material on religion, values, ethics, or esthetics. Nowhere [was] there a really complete description of even one Indian culture. The omission of any factual material on the situation of the Canadian Indian today [was] equally serious. It is just as bad to leave out the facts as it would be to misrepresent them. (p. 18)

Despite some improvements, response to these criticisms was essentially ignored as Aboriginal peoples' voices, although voiced, were simply not heard. Not until the 1970s did educators and education ministries begin to listen to the concerns of Aboriginal peoples regarding their mis-representation and mis-treatment in textbooks.

---

[26] Sluman, in her article published in *The Toronto Education Quarterly*, does not mention the number of textbooks reviewed.

Studies in the 1970s

In a comprehensive quantitative study of 143 authorized Social Studies (Grades 1 to 12) textbooks for the Ontario Human Rights Commission, McDiarmid and Pratt (1971) conclude that most of the authorized textbooks used in Ontario classrooms grossly omitted and thus prejudicially ignored Aboriginal peoples who emerge as the least favoured group:[27]

> An overwhelming number was portrayed as primitive and unskilled; not infrequently they were shown as aggressive and hostile as well. Although most have worn western dress of generations, 95 percent were shown in tribal dress or partly clothed. In 86 percent of the illustrations, one or more Indian males were shown wearing feathers or feathered head-dresses. . . . representing [Aboriginal peoples] only as a primitive people seems entirely unjustified. (p. 51).

By failing to "note the positive contributions and qualities" of Aboriginal peoples, textbooks commit the "main sins of omission", and by using an "excessively political approach, resulting in emphasis on war and conflict, the unscholarly reproduction of stereotypes, and the casual use of emotive or pejorative terms" for Aboriginal peoples, textbooks commit the "main sins of commission" (p. 25). Aboriginal peoples mostly disappear from the traditional canon of Canadian history or are negatively presented within it.

In *Prejudice in Social Studies Textbooks* completed in 1974, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission examined the bias and potential prejudice in 60 Saskatchewan textbooks.

> [Because] no book can ever be entirely free from prejudice or bias . . . it is important to expose types of prejudice, even if they cannot be entirely eliminated, and to generate a healthy skepticism toward the attitudes contained in written material. Beyond this, some textbooks are clearly worse than others with respect to their prejudicial content, and it is of worth to point these out. (p. 3)

These researchers calculate that positive terms such as "skillful" was used 59 times, "beauty" 32 times, "friendly" 25 times, and "proud" 19 times; however, negative terms such as "savage" was mentioned 58 times, "hostile" 42 times, "massacre" 30 times, "warlike" 25 times, "murderer" 22 times, and "rebellious" 20 times (p. 15). With such descriptors, students' impressions of Aboriginal peoples would be overwhelmingly negative.

In response to the federal government's publication of the *White Paper*, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood (1972) published its own "Red Paper" -- *Indian Control of Indian Education*. In it, the committee charges that textbooks

> are needed which emphasize the importance of the Indian's role in Canadian history. Material for reading classes must be developed: material which is relevant to the experience of the Indian child living in isolated or northern areas.
>
> Federal and provincial governments must be ready to respond to the native people and support their legitimate wishes for improved texts. Indian people should be commissioned to work with historians and educators for the development of proper textbook material. (p. 10)

Following this report, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood published in 1974 a substantial and influential review of school textbooks, reiterating the "problems" of textbooks as claimed in previous reports. The main purposes were to eliminate the persistence of omission and bias in teaching materials and to introduce alternate information to "provide a more balanced portrayal of natives" (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1974, p. ii). Based on ten criteria, the study contends that biases against Aboriginal peoples remained prevalent in school texts: bias by omission, defamation, disparagement, cumulative implication, (lack of validity), inertia, obliteration, disembodiment, (lack of) concreteness, and (lack of) comprehensiveness (Part II, pp. ia, iia).[28] Therefore, according to the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, textbooks (and all other teaching materials) must:

1. Present balanced material and various points of view, including Aboriginal epistemology;
2. Avoid generalizations of Aboriginal peoples;
3. Be sensitive in using descriptive terminology that may offend Aboriginal peoples;
4. Take caution before selecting biased material / quotes from primary source;
5. Ensure a complete on-going review of textual materials used in the classroom;
6. Train/educate teachers to detect biased information and attitudes in classroom materials;
7. Include and commission Aboriginal historians and writers to publish

---

[27] The study by McDiarmid and Pratt also examined treatment in textbooks of other minority groups (Christians, Jews, Moslems, Africans, and "immigrants"), not only of Aboriginal peoples.

[28] For further explanation of these criteria, see the study, The Shocking Truth About Indians in Textbooks: Textbook Evaluation (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1974).

textbook material that incorporates their point of view and knowledge;
8. Emphasize the importance of Aboriginal peoples' role in Canadian history. (Part V, p. 1).

Kirkness, in "Prejudice about Indians in Textbooks" published in 1977, further criticizes textbooks for their portrayal of Aboriginal peoples and called for a "drastic change in structure, in substantive content, and in methodology" in which texts must "realistically depict the pluralistic quality of society, both past and present" (pp. 595-596). Using the same criteria as the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, she echoes their findings: "Indians, by far, receive the worst treatment in textbooks of any class of minority, either by omission or commission; [that] recent textbooks still contain prejudice, but in more subtle manner; [and that] authors tend to use the same secondary sources for references and therefore tend to say the same thing" (p. 600).

Perpetuating the same colonial history only perpetuates the same colonial prejudices and biases. By directly addressing and challenging these portrayals of Aboriginal peoples, these studies paved the way for other textbook reviews and subsequent revisions in the 1980s. Significant is the fact that the last two studies present the concerns of Aboriginal peoples as their voices became more politicized and legitimized in mainstream society.

Studies in the 1980s

Following these revelations of Aboriginal images in textbooks, another comprehensive study was undertaken by Alberta Education and published in its report, *Native People in the Curriculum* (Decore et al., 1981). The study examined 246 Social Studies textbooks prescribed in Alberta. Its purposes were to examine the positive, negative, and "neutral" portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in Alberta's Social Studies curriculum and to assess the learning resources holistically in terms of inadequacies, errors, strengths, and overall impression and context of the Social Studies curriculum. From these purposes, the study's rationale was based on three recurring themes when portraying Aboriginal peoples in textbooks: charges of inadequacy (i.e., scarce coverage or "sins of omission"); charges of misrepresentation (i.e., stereotypical descriptions or "sins of commission"); and charges of bias and inaccuracies (i.e., "sins of interpretation") (Decore et al., 1981, p. 34). According to Decore et al., "there is an adequate, though not abundant, amount of native content at most

grade levels. There is evident in many resources . . . a conscious inclusion of material concerning native people" (p. 11). Though comprehensive in its review, the report cites examples "arbitrarily" that "do not represent, necessarily, the 'worst' or 'best' or 'most compelling' instance. . . . The examples are just that, examples" (p. 12). This arbitrariness in encapsulating potentially problematic resources for educators appears contradictory to the seriousness and to the breadth and depth of the study itself, which somewhat weakens its authoritative position. Nevertheless, the report further raises awareness of problematic textbooks and resources regarding stereotypes, biases, errors of facts and misinterpretations of Aboriginal peoples, resulting in the "de-authorization" and "de-listing" of several textbooks in the Alberta school system.

Using a much smaller sample of authorized Ontario textbooks in 1984, O'Neill quantitatively examined and recorded the frequency of terms such as "warlike" (89 times), "raiding" (46 times), "skillful" (72 times), "helpful" (32 times), and "important" (25 times) in Ontario textbooks (p. 36). Despite the apparent "balance" between negative and positive descriptors, the fact that the terms "warlike" and "raiding" were used so frequently may, and arguably would, reinforce colonial stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples among students. In effect, textbooks have traditionally and historically presented a damaging negative view of Aboriginal peoples, asserting the superiority of white civilization (van Brummelen, 1986). However, O'Neill only analyzed 10 Ontario textbooks in his study, which perhaps is too narrow to make substantial generalizations. Nevertheless, he did see an encouraging trend of more positive images and portrayals, and points out that the "problem of prejudice towards Indians in recent history textbooks is less serious than earlier works" but also admits not to be "too optimistic as there is much room for improvement" (1984, p. 37).

Studies in the 1990 to the Present

No significant studies or reviews of school textbooks took place during the 1990s, as on the surface, improvements and changes in authorized curricula did transpire. However, despite the increase in the awareness and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in the history of Canada, criticisms of textbooks began to shift from the absence and inaccuracies of and biases against Aboriginal peoples to the colonial/imperial treatment of them. Images of Aboriginal peoples became clustered and collected into the "Textbook Indian" -- the Indian

which an Anglocentric view of Canada "invented in order to justify its own hegemony" (Francis, 1997, p. 71).

The legacy of colonialism continued to form the structural framework of Canadian history textbooks as they do "little to explore Aboriginal motives and subjectivity, nor [do they] allow readers to see Native people as historical actors", and as a result "narratives [make] it increasingly difficult to see them as anything but a vanished race relegated to anachronistic time" (Coates & Morgan, 2002, p. 190). Thus, the contemporary image of Aboriginal peoples was ironically a historical one: "The image could not be modernized. Indians were defined in relation to the past and in contradistinction to White society. To the degree that they changed, they were perceived to become less Indian" (Francis, 1992, p. 59). Moreover, what is considered "authentic" becomes essentialist and the "Other" whereby, as Smith (1999) argues, at "the heart of such authenticity is a belief that indigenous cultures cannot change, cannot recreate themselves and still claim to be indigenous. Nor can they be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory" (p. 74). The historical agency of Aboriginal peoples "could only be recognized intermittently: their construction as non-European allies was always laced with imperial ambivalence and apprehension" (Coates & Morgan, 2002, p. 180). Thus, Aboriginal knowledge, epistemology and inclusion need to be addressed not only in textbooks but also by the teachers in the classroom:

> Departments and ministries of education are now fully aware that Indian people must be involved in the development of curriculum resources. But curricula and materials are not enough. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the history and contemporary issues of aboriginal peoples. They must know how to choose materials that are appropriate and how to teach about aboriginal peoples in a respectful way. . . but more than this, it is imperative that teachers bring the appropriate values to their teachings. (Steinhauer, 1997, p. 258)

In a 2007 study, Clark examined 26 authorized Canadian history texts in British Columbia and Ontario published from the mid-1980s to the present.[29] Images of Aboriginal peoples of the more distant past are seen as a "spectator" or as a "savage warrior" (Clark, 2007, p. 103). As spectators, Aboriginal peoples are "separate from the real 'action' of the

[29] Clark, in her study, covers various eras of textbooks (1911-1931, mid-1960s to 1980s, and mid-1980s to the present day). For the purposes of this section of the literature review, I have only included the last era while omitting the others.

text narrative" (p. 103) -- object of history rather than the subject. As savage warriors, Aboriginal peoples are depicted not as heroes but as demonized people to be civilized or tamed. Clark categorizes the images of contemporary Aboriginal peoples in textbooks as being exotic, a "problem", uniquely spiritual, protesters, and invisible. Exotic images of traditional ceremonies to preserve and celebrate artistic and cultural accomplishments are captured but also frozen in the past without contemporary or historic context and explanation. Images of Aboriginal peoples as a "problem" usually include depictions of abuse (drugs and alcohol), suicide, and poverty. Spiritual images overly characterize Aboriginal peoples as uniquely spiritual and inherently environmental, which may seem to be positive attributes but in the end are still stereotypes. Protesting images of Aboriginal peoples are "by far the most common depiction of twentieth-century Aboriginal people in textbooks" (p. 108). "Invisible images" of Aboriginal peoples "is the standard practice for Canadian history textbooks" of including them in the history canon whereby they disappear from the narrative only to surface when they "fit" the images of the other categories (p. 110). Teachers must therefore continue to be cautious in using textbooks -- examining and critiquing not only their content but also their omissions and misrepresentations of Aboriginal peoples.

Future Studies

In reviewing the literature for Aboriginal education in Canada and Aboriginal images and representations in texts, three prominent issues of research arise that should be addressed more comprehensively. First, there is a need for more urban studies where Aboriginal students are mostly integrated into the public school system but still constitute a minority. The academic, social, and emotional challenges and struggles they face as Aboriginal students in urban settings are different from predominantly Aboriginal communities as the students becomes more integrated into mainstream society. Therefore, issues of identity and identification play a significant role for such Aboriginal students. Although Richards, in *Creating Choices. Rethinking Aboriginal Policy* (2006), provides a brief look at the performance of Aboriginal students in BC schools, he uses the results from the provincially administered Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) in reading, writing, and numeracy for Grades 4, 7, and 10 as key measuring standards and concludes that the results "are not

satisfactory" (p. 81). With statistical graphs and correlative data, he postulates several "variables of interest":

> Poverty, low education, single-parenthood, high concentrations of culturally marginalized groups, and a culture of welfare dependency may combine to "tip" a neighbourhood into ghetto-like status. One of the adverse outcomes of a poor neighbourhood is likely to be poor school results. . . . There is evidence that schools with large minority racial cohorts have problems with academic performance -- one reason is that good teachers are hard for weaker schools to retain. (p. 85)

Richards, however, apparently fails to grasp the concept of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology, and, through his Eurocentric lens, offers problematic assumptions as explanations. Although he does not directly claim such explanations as causations for the generally poorer Foundation Skills Assessment results among Aboriginal students, his language certainly does.

Second, because textbooks have become the main resources in the classroom, studies examining their use with students regarding their perceptions of Aboriginal peoples and issues would prove insightful: what effects do negative images and portrayals of Aboriginal peoples have an impact on students versus positive ones? Although numerous evaluations of provincially recommended textbooks examining both positive and negative images and portrayals of Aboriginal peoples have been conducted (and such reviews are continuously and professionally warranted in the future), they remain effectually limited as changes in text have mostly remained "cosmetic". While content information including visual aids and organizers has improved with greater inclusion of Aboriginal peoples and issues, the perspective is still mainly Eurocentric as Indigenous knowledge and epistemology are often ignored and thus omitted within the texts.

Third, the teacher as informer and interpreter is as important as the textbook itself. Educators need to be culturally sensitive and aware both of the images and portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in texts and of their ways of knowing and thinking. The danger lies in the potential perpetuation and reinforcement of past negative images and mis-representations of Aboriginal peoples in texts that educators may mistakenly and/or unintentionally imply and convey to their students.

Concluding Remarks

From Confederation to most of the twentieth century, education for Aboriginal peoples followed an assimilative model. Whether the government established industrial day schools or residential schools and whether the government segregated or integrated Aboriginal students, the goal was consistently oppressive aimed at colonial control. However, with a changing political and social environment, Aboriginal peoples' voices are being heard. Only recently has this history been acknowledged, legitimized, and addressed. Only recently has the healing process begun in Aboriginal circles. Only recently has the movement toward decolonization begun with Aboriginal peoples with governmental policies and initiatives.

Similarly, Social Studies textbooks depicting Aboriginal peoples have also evolved over time reflecting the political and social atmosphere: from the overtly racist and negative portrayals and descriptions of Aboriginal peoples of the 1960s and 1970s to more inclusive and neutral ones of the 1980s and 1990s. However, as Clark (2007) concludes in her study, "Canadian history textbooks have not yet come to grips with what reconciliation means within a postcolonial settler society. As such, they reflect the broader societal context in which they are written" (p. 111). Thus, Aboriginal peoples in textbooks continue to be the "Other". Canada's historical canon must be altered to a narrative not solely based on progression but one on inclusion and evolution.

Ultimately, Aboriginal education and Aboriginal images and representations in text are inextricably connected and reflective of the times. Not only did Aboriginal peoples experience a colonized history, textbooks objectified and viewed them as colonized peoples. However, as they began to assert their political voice, power, and rights, changes in government, district, and school policies began to affect how they were portrayed and interpreted in textbooks. One way to address Aboriginal education is to include positive and realistic Aboriginal images and representations in texts; reflexively, to have positive and realistic Aboriginal images and representations in texts, Aboriginal education needs to be addressed. This continual transformation of both educational programs and textbooks brings hope to the future of Aboriginal education. Only then will Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology be recognized and legitimized. Only then can decolonization be realized. Only then can Aboriginal education be truly transformative and empowering.

CHAPTER 4
ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN SURREY DISTRICT'S SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTS

In examining Aboriginal images and representation in BC secondary school Social Studies textbooks, this chapter first describes the ministry's prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) for Social Studies 9 through 11 as they pertain to Aboriginal peoples and issues, explaining what students are expected to know within each course. Twelve textbooks that the Surrey District approved for these courses are then examined using the criteria from Dillabough and McAlpine's research (1996) and the Ministry of Education's evaluation guide (2002).

BC Secondary Social Studies Provincial Curricula

Social Studies, according to the BC Ministry of Education, is a "multidisciplinary subject that draws from the social sciences and humanities to study human interaction and natural and social environments" whose main goal is to "develop thoughtful, responsible, active citizens who are able to acquire the requisite information to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments" (BC Ministry of Education, 1997, p. 9). Within each grade, the ministry outlines prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs). In the most recent PLOs for the Social Studies 9 curriculum, Aboriginal peoples and issues are only mentioned four times in which students are expected to 1) analyze the relationship between Aboriginal people and Europeans and explain their role of each in the development of Canada, 2) describe daily life in Aboriginal communities, New France, and British North America, 3) demonstrate understanding of the ways in which Aboriginal people interact with their environment, and 4) explain the role of Aboriginal people in the fur trade and in the exploration of North America (pp. 24, 30). Social Studies 9, with regard to Aboriginal peoples, covers the origins of Aboriginal peoples to 1815 in North America. The PLOs for Social Studies 10 chronologically continue from the Grade 9 course with the history of Canada from 1815 to 1914. They mention Aboriginal peoples only four times in its PLOs, in which students are expected to 1) assess the interaction between Aboriginal people and Europeans, 2) describe contributions made by Aboriginal people, the French, and the British

to the development of Canada, 3) evaluate the impact of western expansion and federal policies on Aboriginal people, and 4) analyze the impact of the Red River Rebellion and the Northwest Rebellion on the development of Canada (pp. 34, 38).[30] As for the newly revised Social Studies 11 curriculum, Aboriginal peoples and issues are specified only once in the PLOs in which students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by Aboriginal people in Canada during the 20th century and their responses with reference to 1) residential schools, 2) reserves, 3) self-government, and 4) treaty negotiations (BC Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 21).

Despite the limited profile of Aboriginal peoples and issues in the curricula, these integrated resource packages / curricular guides are a vast improvement from the ministry's previous ones (established in 1988), in which Aboriginal peoples were seen as historical objects rather than active subjects who played important roles in the history of Canada. Aboriginal peoples were scarcely acknowledged in the guide as they were seen as peripheral players in Canadian history. Questions such as, "How did geographic features, the presence of Native peoples, and military considerations influence the location and development of early settlements?" (Social Studies 9) and "What impact did the fur trade have on the Native peoples?" (Social Studies 10) (BC Ministry of Education, 1988, pp. 41, 57), placed Aboriginal peoples in secondary and objectified roles in Canadian history.

The Integrated Resource Packages for the Social Studies strand also provide a list of comprehensive recommended resources for each course. In order to be labeled as "comprehensive", the ministry evaluates it to see how much it covers the learning outcomes.[31] This evaluation is a continuous process, and according to the ministry:

> Resources judged to have a potentially significant match to the learning outcomes for individual IRPs are evaluated by practicing classroom teachers who are trained by ministry staff to use provincial evaluation criteria. . . .
>
> Learning resources will retain their recommended status for a minimum of five years after which time they may be withdrawn from the Grade Collections, thereby terminating their provincially recommended status.

---

[30] The PLOs for Social Studies 10 also expect students to analyse the impact of the "Red River Rebellion" and the "Northwest Rebellion" on the development of Canada; however, by stating the event as a "rebellion" as opposed to a "resistance" and without mentioning the Métis as key players, the curriculum confirms and reinforces a colonial perspective.

[31] For further information about the criteria for provincial approval of textbooks, see Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources: A Guide at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/resdocs/esm_guide.pdf.

> Decisions regarding the withdrawal of learning resources will be based on, but not limited to, considerations of curriculum support, currency, and availability. Schools may continue to use a learning resource after withdrawal provided local school board approval is obtained. (BC Ministry of Education, 1997, p. B-3)

At the time of this study, all of the provincially recommended Social Studies 9 and 10 textbooks were also approved by the Surrey School District; however, a slight anomaly existed with the Social Studies 11 textbooks as one that was recommended by the ministry was not listed by the Surrey School District (*Canadians in the Global Community*, 1997) and one surprisingly older textbook (*Towards Tomorrow: History*, 1988) was approved by the district but was no longer on the provincial ministry list.[32] Of all the recommended textbooks in Surrey, the Cranny series (*Crossroads*, *Horizons*, and *Counterpoints*) is the most widely used by teachers in the district because they follow the prescribed learning outcomes in the Integrated Resource Packages the most comprehensively. Most of the other listed textbooks are used as reference or supplements in the classroom.[33]

Although teachers are not required to use the provincially recommended resources, school boards must approve any other resources before the school can purchase them. More complicated, however, is that the resource list for Surrey is constantly being updated.[34] Most teachers in the end follow the list recommended by the province and school district for convenience as the approved textbooks closely cover the prescribed learning outcomes of the course.

---

[32] I can only speculate as to why this specific textbook remains on the district list. First, it is a textbook that most (if not all) secondary schools in Surrey purchased in bulk at the time of its provincial and district authorizations and hence many of these textbooks are still in the schools. Second, the historical content, although only covering up to the 1980s, is quite thorough for the 20th Century. However, I would argue, after informal discussions with other Social Studies teachers at provincial and district conferences and in district department meetings, that this textbook is no longer used as the main textbook in class but rather as a reference or supplementary text for teachers and students.

[33] From discussions in district meetings, Social Studies department heads state that they all use the Cranny series while the other recommended textbooks are too expensive to buy for their classes as they do not cover all the necessary prescribed learning outcomes.

[34] Even during the time of the first draft to the revision stage of this dissertation, three of the Grade 11 Social Studies textbooks were already "delisted" and therefore schools can no longer purchase them for use.

Textbook Images of Aboriginal Peoples

In examining the authorized textbooks for the different grade levels, this section will show in general how textbooks portray Aboriginal peoples historically and currently using images and accompanying texts. The selected images from the textbooks include sketches, paintings, works of art, and photographs. Because of the differing time frames for each Social Studies course, the images used in the textbooks show a trend. In the more distant past, textbooks are limited to the media of sketches, paintings, and works of art (such as for Social Studies 9), which tend to portray Aboriginal peoples as objects of history. However, in the more recent past and present, textbooks almost exclusively use photographs (such as for Social Studies 11), which tend to portray Aboriginal peoples as subjects of history (at least in the photos themselves).[35] From a negative perspective, these visual and textual portrayals of Aboriginal peoples tend to be marginalized, essentialized, seen as a problem, and decontextualized; however, from a more positive perspective, some of the textbooks do challenge the status quo of the images through greater inclusion and critical thinking. The images in the textbooks, however, should not be removed or changed but rather discussed in class regarding their historical contexts, meanings, and implications.

Aboriginal Peoples as Marginalized

Textbooks tend to depict Aboriginal peoples as peripheral objects in history. In surveying the origins of Aboriginal peoples to the early evolution of Canada, Social Studies textbooks generally marginalize them as spectators from a Eurocentric point of view. They are "separate from the real 'action' of the text narrative. They tend to be in the shadows, on the ground, with their backs to the viewer, or simply in the position of supplicant" (Clark, 2007, p. 103).

As subjects, individual Europeans are portrayed as the accomplishers, the achievers, and the makers of history. In a painting by J. D. Kelly, "Discovery of Canada", Jacques Cartier is bartering with the Aboriginal peoples of the Gaspé Peninsula (see Figure 4.1). Here, the subject of the painting and of history is Cartier, a European explorer sent to "claim the land for France" (Clark & McKay, 1992, p. 26). Although the text acknowledges European colonization where "European rulers claimed ownership" over lands and "extended

(Figure 4.1 - "Discovery of Canada". Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Clark & McKay, 1992, p. 26.)

their control over the people, even though the Native peoples had been living there for thousands of years" (p. 26), the image shows Aboriginal peoples as rather passive players in history. Only a few are standing while the rest are seated on the beach. This peripheral role is reinforced somewhat in the text as it continues the narrative with Jacques Cartier without much of the Aboriginal people of the Gaspé region:

> Jacques Cartier was a French mariner who was commissioned by the king of France to search for a short route to the Far East. He reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1534 and placed a cross on the Gaspé Peninsula that read "Long live the King of France," thus claiming French control in North America. . . . Cartier was treated with kindness and hospitality by the Native people he met upon arrival in the New World. (p. 26)

One potential message from this painting is that Cartier, not the Aboriginal peoples, is in-charge. The Aboriginal peoples act in reaction and in response to Cartier and the Europeans while Cartier initiates contact and trade with the Aboriginal peoples.

Similarly, in a painting of Henry Kelsey hunting buffalo with the Assiniboine, the subject is Kelsey with his profile looking at the buffalo herd while the faces of the six accompanying Assiniboine are mostly ignored (see Figure 4.2). Even the Assiniboine standing beside Kelsey is faceless. The context within which this painting is presented is in the chapter entitled, "Continuing Conflict between Britain and France" (p. 61), which describes the struggle between the two European nations in terms of controlling the growing fur industry.

---

[35] For Social Studies 10, which covers 19th Century Canada, all the various types of media mentioned are used.

(Figure 4.2 – Henry Kelsey with Assiniboine People. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Clark & McKay, 1992, p. 63.)

The subtle message is that individual Aboriginal peoples of the Plains do not appear within the canon of Canadian history; instead, individual "explorers" and "traders" such as Kelsey and Henday for the British and La Vérendrye for the French do. Thus, the main players in this time of Canadian history remain Eurocentrically based which subtly reinforces and affirms European colonization. As such, students may accept this version of history without an Aboriginal perspective.

This Eurocentric image is also found in *Community Canada* in such paintings as the one showing Étienne Brûlé, the "First Coureur De Bois" (see Figure 4.3). Again, the painting depicts Brûlé virtually in the middle and is leading the expedition with a concentrated gaze. The accompanying Aboriginal peoples are either looking down or have a look of uncertainty. Their role in the "expedition" is thus minimized. Even the text states: "The coureurs de bois played a vital role in the fur trade. They acted as interpreters for the Native peoples and the merchants" (Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 191). The text also provides a brief profile on Brûlé claiming that without him,

> Champlain would have had difficulty completing his maps of the vast new continent. . . .
>
> Since he spoke [the Native Peoples'] languages and understood their ways, Brûlé gained the friendship and respect of the Native peoples. . . .
>
> Many times during his life, Brûlé faced death. Once he was captured by some Seneca, enemies of the Huron. He was tortured and would have been killed. Reports say he managed to escape by persuading his captors that an approaching thunderstorm was a sign from the spirits that he should live. . . . In the end some Huron killed Brûlé in the summer of 1633. No one knows

why. Perhaps Brûlé had insulted or betrayed them. There is no record for the reason of the first coureur de bois's death. (p. 191).

(Figure 4.3 – Étienne Brûlé. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 192.)

The history centres on Brûlé without much consideration of and for the Aboriginal peoples' significant role in the fur trade. The only mention here of them is the "capturing" and "torturing" of Brûlé whose textual image only demonizes them as primitive aggressors.

Arguably one of the most recognizable and historically "famous" paintings in Canada's history is "The death of Wolfe", which illustrates General Wolfe fatally wounded on the Plains of Abraham surrounded by soldiers and a lone Iroquois sitting contemplatively and mournfully at his feet (see Figure 4.4).

(Figure 4.4 – The Death of Wolfe. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 248.)

Viewers may sympathize with Wolfe, the British "hero" in the battle, as his face and body language show his hopeless and helpless fate in the narrative of the "Fall of New France". In contrast to Wolfe, who is relatively centred in the painting, the nameless Iroquois is

physically marginalized, placed in the corner facing Wolfe with his back to the viewers and stereotypically with feathers in his hair, large hanging earrings, and scarce clothing above the waist. Despite being perceived as an authentic view and account of the English-French battle among Canadians, this painting is "largely a work of fiction" where in reality "no Indian was there" (Francis, 1992, p. 14). The painter, Benjamin West, was an admirer of the "Noble Savage and so included him the contemplative Native" (p. 14). Thus, while the token Iroquois in the painting has been publicly accepted as historically accurate, he remains an imaginary image.

By marginalizing Aboriginal peoples in Canada's history, the narrative becomes one about Aboriginal peoples and not of or by them. They become accompaniments along the way of the canon without much voice or agency. As such, these images of Aboriginal peoples overemphasize European exploration and settlement and hence dismiss Aboriginal peoples' cultural and historical identity.

Aboriginal Peoples as Essentialized

Textbooks that account for the more distant past tend to present images of Aboriginal peoples that stereotypically and historically romanticize, overgeneralize, or even demonize them as "primitive" or "savage". Textbooks that survey the more recent history tend to glorify Aboriginal exoticism and spirituality. From such depictions, Aboriginal peoples are essentialized into a prescribed image.

In a photograph of a "Blackfoot family with a travois", the image presented appears neutral, making this particular Blackfoot family the subject of the photograph and capturing what seems to be a historically accurate event (see Figure 4.5). However, in the caption, the question reads, "What is being carried on this travois?" (Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 120). Although the authors most likely did not intend to objectify the Blackfoot child or romanticize the image of the Blackfoot on the Plains, the question should read, "Who and/or what are being carried on this travois?" This semantic difference, however, may not seem significant, but in portraying Aboriginal peoples in image and text, cultural sensitivity, especially in the classroom to students, is essential. An explanation of the family's attire and adornments on the horses would also contextualize and give greater meaning and understanding of them rather than only presenting this particular photograph. Aboriginal

(Figure 4.5 – Blackfoot family with a travois. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 120.)

peoples are more than "furs and feathers" in which

> being First Nations is not something that can be put on and taken off like a pair of jeans. Teachers and students who call on images of tipis, tomahawks, beads and buckskins reveal dehumanized thinking about First Nations people. Such representations can position First Nations people as the Romantic Mythical Other and reflects an understanding of history that supports the "forgetting" of past injustices and their implications for the present. (Fletcher, 2000, p. 343).

In *Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations*, a more graphic photograph of a young man performing the Sun Dance as a rite of initiation shows an image that demonizes the past (see Figure 4.6).

(Figure 4.6 – Sun Dance. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 201.)

In the section titled, "Plains Spirituality: The Sun Dance", the text explains:

> The Sun Dance was the central religious festival of the Plains peoples. Actually, is has nothing to do with worshipping the sun. Among the Plains Cree, it was called the "Thirsting Dance." This is a more accurate term, since the dancers sought visions by subjecting themselves to pain and suffering. . . .

> Dancers were not allowed food, drink, or rest until the Sun Dance was over. They danced in place, following the rhythm of chants, keeping their gaze fixed on the top of the centre pole. To prove themselves, young men would have their chests pierced with skewers of bone, which would be attached by ropes to the centre pole. As they danced, they would lean backward until the skewers were ripped out. The scars that resulted were held in high esteem as badges of the ability to withstand pain -- essential for a warrior. (Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 201)

By highlighting this particular festival for the Plains Peoples, the textbook in its graphic description may have inadvertently perpetuated an image of "primitiveness". More information and context are needed for both teachers and students to understand more fully the importance of such a ritual ceremony. More important, however, is that the dated photograph has publicized a private and sacred initiation. This invasion of Indigenous space in effect does not appear to respect Indigenous knowledge. Although historically and photographically accurate, does the image do more harm than good in terms of students learning about the Sun Dance? What impressions does this image leave? Whose voice is used to describe this sacred ceremony?

Similarly, the textbook also oversimplifies and overgeneralizes the First Nations peoples on BC's coast in its section titled "Exploration":

> The Coast Indians had large populations and powerful, well-organized societies. They could deal from strength. Maquinna, a famous Nu-chal'-nath leader from the area of Nookta Sound, on Vancouver Island, demanded respect. Mariners were careful in their dealings with Maquinna and his people. It was easy and very dangerous to give offence. The crews of more than one trading ship were killed when they insulted or otherwise angered the Northwest Coast peoples. (Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, pp. 274-275)

This description in essence portrays Coastal First Nations peoples as violent aggressors. Similarly, the authors describe the Iroquois with potentially damaging images: the "powerful Iroquois moved in and almost annihilated the Huron and other Native bands in southern Ontario. They destroyed all the missions in Huronia . . . Jesuit priests were captured and tortured to death . . . The Iroquois were skilled aggressors" (p. 234). Although they may be subjects of history in this specific event, they are nonetheless demonized in the historic canon.

In the famous painting portraying the Battle (or Massacre) of Seven Oaks by C. W. Jeffreys, the Métis are depicted as the "savage warrior" as they are clearly seen as the violent aggressors who are on horseback instigating the battle (see Figure 4.7).

(Figure 4.7 – "Battle of Seven Oaks". Figure removed for copyright reasonsl. Original source found in Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 282.)

The European settlers are seen as defenders and victims where only two are shooting back with rifles and the rest are timidly standing back or lying down. Three of the textbooks show slightly different variations of this painting. In the accompanying text, Cruxton and Wilson, in their narration, explain that the "Métis and Nor'Westers harassed the settlement, burning crops and destroying the buildings of Fort Douglas" (1997, p. 80). In *Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations*, the text provides a simple description: "The conflict came to a head at Seven Oaks, when the governor and twenty-one settlers and HBC employees were killed in a fight with some Métis, supporters of the NWC" (Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 282). Interestingly, however, the same main author, Cranny, provides a more reflective, less demonizing approach to the same painting in his other textbook, *Horizon: Canada Moves West*, in which the caption reads: "This romanticized view of the Battle of Seven Oaks shows Semple and his army of twenty-eight colonists taking a brave stand against the Métis" (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999, p. 145). The description in the text itself also provides a different perspective which does not sympathize with Semple and his men as the painting would otherwise evoke: "Grant and a party of Métis arrived at the Red River colony. . . . Grant, an intelligent, well-educated leader, was also an employee of the NWC. Semple, and his underlings, however, regarded all Métis as inferior, because of their mixed ancestry" (p. 146). Despite this depiction, however, the subject of history remains ethnocentrically European as the Métis remain nameless while Grant and Semple are written within the narrative.

In more contemporary settings, textbooks continue to essentialize Aboriginal peoples as inherently traditional and spiritual. Common would be photographs of traditional dances in traditional attires. In celebrating the Supreme Court's Delgamuukw decision during a press conference in Vancouver, members of the Gitxsan band are depicted in a dance (see Figure 4.8).

(Figure 4.8 – Gitxsan member celebrating. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Fielding & Evans, 2001, p. 406.)

(Figure 4.9 - Phanuelie Palluq performing a drum dance. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 209.)

(Figure 4.10 – Ceremonial Talking Stick. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 246.)

(Figure 4.11 – Eagle Dance. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 146.)

In other photographs, Phanuelie Palluq performs a drum dance before federal ministers at a ceremony where the government offered an apology for the cruel treatment of children in residential schools (see Figure 4.9) and Rod Robinson (executive director of the Nisga'a Tribal Council) carries the sacred Talking Stick in leading a procession of elders (see Figure

4.10). Also, in celebrating a potlatch, a photograph shows a dancer performing the eagle dance (see Figure 4.11). However, in these photographs, further explanations and descriptions are needed in order for students (and teachers) to understand the historical and cultural significance of each. Instead, the physical images of Aboriginal peoples wearing feathers, masks, and a cape tend to strip the cultural, historic, and symbolic meanings away while in essence promoting and perpetuating an exotic and romanticized view of them. Yet, these cultural traditions are important for students to learn and understand in order to bridge cultural relations and should be included in the textbooks. By overemphasizing these images without deeper explanations and descriptions, however, students in turn may become desensitized into believing that these are the only traits and characteristics that make Aboriginal peoples "Aboriginal".

By essentializing Aboriginal peoples, textbooks of the more distant past tend to overemphasize them as violent and aggressive where exoticized and romanticized images of Aboriginal peoples seem to be the norm for this time period. Textbooks of the more recent past and present tend to stereotype Aboriginal traditions without contextual descriptions or explanations and with the exclusion of their contemporary realities. In turn, Aboriginal peoples appear frozen in time where such portrayals become their present-day reality. More important, however, Aboriginal voices continue to be missing in these narratives.

Aboriginal Peoples as a Problem

Textbooks surveying Canada's 20th Century appear more apt to present images of conflict and poverty. With images of conflict, Aboriginal peoples are seen as the perpetrators who are stereotypically protesting for more "Native rights", protection of the environment, or land claims. With images of poverty, Aboriginal peoples are seen as the victims, mostly living in substandard and impoverished communities.

Although not within the time frame of the 20th Century, a historically significant "conflict" occurred in 1885 between the federal government and the Métis. Labeled as the "North-West Rebellion", the Métis are negatively seen as rebels as opposed to resistors to the government (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999; Cruxton & Wilson, 1997). Evoking images of violence and treason, "rebellion" carries with it negative connotations. However, only Clark and McKay use the term, "Red River Resistance" of 1870 and the "North-West

Resistance, 1885" in their textbook (1992). Using the term "resistance" as opposed to "rebellion" changes not only the Eurocentric point of view, but also the public image of the Métis and the historical interpretation of Riel. Parliamentary debates have centred on whether Riel was a traitor to the Queen or a Father of Confederation and textbooks have begun to reflect on this issue.

Images and photographs of Aboriginal peoples in the 20th Century, however, increasingly depict them as protestors. For example, an Aboriginal woman is photographed performing a "traditional dance during a protest for Native rights", and in the background signs read, "Indian Nations Forever" and "We've Only Just(ice) Begun" (see Figure 4.12). Yet, the caption and surrounding text do not contextualize the situation. Is the image depicting more of a dance or a protest? Are there dances that are used for protests? What specifically do the "protestors" want? What were the political, social, and economic conditions that led to this "protest"?

In another photograph, a Mi'kmaq boy "takes part in a demonstration over Native fishing rights in New Brunswick" where placards read, "My parents want to provide a living for me!", "Respect our ancestors", and "Negotiation applies to you. Dictatorship applies to us" (see Figure 4.13). In this particular photograph, it is not clear if the boy is actually participating in the demonstration but because he is captured on film running by the protest signs, viewers may assume that he is. These images do not invite or encourage dialogue and, in textbooks, they may inadvertently evoke negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples among students as constant protestors and complainers.

(Figure 4.12 – Woman performing traditional dance for a protest. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Morton, 1988, p. 208.)

(Figure 4.13 –Mi'kmaq boy and New Brunswick fishing rights. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Fielding & Evans, 1988, p. 208.)

Arguably one of the most infamous photographs that captures First Nations "resistance" to the federal government is the one of a Mohawk confronting a Canadian soldier at Oka in 1990 as found in three of the recommended Social Studies 11 textbooks (see Figure 4.14).

(Figure 4.14 – Mohawk warrior and Canadian soldier. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 211.)

(Figure 4.15 – Mohawk woman with child. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Fielding & Evans, 2001, p. 384.)

The textbooks use terms such as "crisis", "face-off", "stand-off", and "confrontation" to describe the events at Oka during this time. Depicted as the aggressor, the anonymous Mohawk "warrior" is physically leaning toward and looking down at a Canadian soldier as if trying to intimidate him. He is also wearing sunglasses and a handkerchief to cover his face, as one would stereotypically imagine a terrorist would look. In another image, a woman is seen on the ground crying, clutching on to her child with one arm while holding onto a soldier with the other (see Figure 4.15). The caption in this photograph reads, "This Mohawk mother fled from the Kanesatake reserve during the Oka crisis of 1990. . . . Why would she flee from the reserve when the warriors were taking a position to protect Mohawk land rights?" (p. 384). By posing this question, the textbook views the Mohawks as a problem who do not appear to help their own people. Also, the photograph is ambiguous in that the viewer does not know why the woman is crying on the ground. Is she is distressed because of the soldier or because of the Mohawk warriors? Perhaps there was dissent among the Mohawks, but the meaning of the image and caption remain unclear.

A similar image is presented of the incident at Ipperwash, Ontario where the caption reads, "In 1995, the Ojibwa challenged the municipal government to return lands used as a golf course, one frequented by members of the Canadian military . . . The confrontation escalated, and actions taken by both sides in the dispute resulted in a violent confrontation" (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999, p. 59; see Figure 4.16).

(Figure 4.16 – Ipperwash incident in. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny, Jarvis, Moles & Seney, 1999, p. 59.)

The image of the burning tires and an Ojibwa man, whose face is covered by a handkerchief and is holding an altered flag of Canada that has a First Nations person in the middle of the maple leaf, may unintentionally send a message that Aboriginal peoples believe in violence. Again, such images do not promote cross-cultural dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the classroom but may instead provoke confrontation.

In addition to overemphasizing conflict, textbooks tend to portray Aboriginal peoples in the 20th Century as living in squalid communities or reserves plagued with the social ills of alcoholism, drug addiction, unemployment, and suicide. In depicting the Stoney band in 1929, the authors of *Canada: Face of a Nation* write:

> The quality of life on the reserves continued to decline. Even though alcohol was banned it was consumed in unhealthy amounts. Suicide rates were the highest in the country and diseases like tuberculosis continued to kill many more people. Most bands lived in terrible poverty with inferior housing, no running water or indoor toilets, and poor diets. (Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 77; see Figure 4.17).

(Figure 4.17 – Stoney Band receiving federal money. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 77.)

The accompanying photograph further reinforces this negative image, in which the caption asks, "How would you feel as an Aboriginal person receiving government money?" (p. 77).

In an attempt to empathize with the Stoney band during this time, the text "Otherizes" them. One band member is dressed in traditional attire with head feathers while the others who are behind him in the line are dressed in Western clothes. Students may wonder how contrived the photograph may actually be. Why would this one particular Stoney band member be "dressed up" to receive his government cheque whose image is exactly captured on film at that precise moment?

Referring to more recent times, in an "up-close" section entitled, "Poverty on Aboriginal Reserves", the text states that

> high rates of infant mortality, substandard housing, few social services, and low life expectancy create conditions closer to those found in countries associated with the bottom half of the Human Development Index. . . . Poor sanitation and water quality, substandard housing and health care are linked to the high levels of infant mortality, infectious diseases, and safety concerns. (Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 354)

(Figure 4.18 – Residents in Davis Inlet. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 355)

The accompanying photograph reinforces this description (see Figure 4.18). It shows an unpaved road in the reserve and repeats its message of poverty in the caption: "Residents of the reserve in Davis Inlet, Labrador, have high unemployment and a low standard of living" (p. 355). By specifically segregating this "story" outside the main text into a profiled box and calling it "Poverty on Aboriginal Reserves", the textbook has continued to victimize the victims: negative images such as this one further stigmatizes Aboriginal peoples. In turn, Aboriginal students within the classroom may feel alienated and embarrassed with these colonial stereotypes.

In *Canada: Face of a Nation*, the authors affirm and confirm this depressing portrayal, as they refer to the report, *Survival for Tribal Peoples International*, which labels

the five hundred Innu of Labrador's Davis Inlet as "the most suicidal-ridden people of the world" (Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 289). Unfortunately, such descriptions and images are common within textbooks where readers tend to see and read about the contemporary struggles and problems of Aboriginal peoples.

Similarly, in a photograph from *Canadian Issues: A Contemporary Perspective*, six Aboriginal children are portrayed as living in an impoverished reservation in northern Manitoba (see Figure 4.19).

(Figure 4.19 – Children in a northern Manitoba reserve. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Francis et al., 1998, p. 342.)

Because the accompanying caption is written in present tense, readers are led to believe that life on this reserve (and/or perhaps generalized to most reserves) continues to be rather dismal. Perhaps life on this particular reserve may not have improved; however, images of other reserves that are not "in poverty" should be presented in the textbook to provide a better balance of different realities. As in other cases, the context for this photograph is ignored, in which no explanation or description is provided as to when, how, and why this situation has come to be: how can a photo of six children outside a house relate to being in poverty? Moreover, the black and white photograph further evokes a sense of hopelessness within the reservation.

By portraying Aboriginal peoples with problems, textbooks have unduly emphasized events and situations of conflict and/or social and economic hardships. Though such experiences do need to be documented as they do reflect some reality, a balance of positive and negative stories is needed. Although textbooks do try to explain the issues at hand, greater depth is needed in the historical and contemporary narratives of Aboriginal peoples, especially in describing and clarifying the snapshot images of them.

Aboriginal Peoples as Decontextualized

In decontextualizing Aboriginal peoples, textbooks tend to treat them in isolation or even misappropriate their cultures; however, perhaps the most prevalent "portrayal" of them in these textbooks is ironically their absence in the narrative text itself, especially for the ones surveying 20th Century Canada.

First, in presenting Aboriginal peoples and issues, textbooks generally have at most a chapter or unit about them; most often, textbooks will have a section or a "special box" within a chapter or unit that profiles them. In the Grade 9 textbooks, images and descriptions of Aboriginal peoples are more prevalent as they usually discuss the different groups culturally before European contact and describe their interactions during and after contact. However, as much as Aboriginal peoples are incorporated into the text, they are for the most part interspersed within the European narrative of "explorers", traders, and settlers, as more images of Europeans than of Aboriginal peoples are present in the textbooks. In the Grade 10 textbooks, images and descriptions of Aboriginal peoples mostly centre on the fur trade, buffalo hunt, Red River settlement, and Métis "Rebellion". Again, however, they are generally presented in relation to European development and progress. After Lois Riel, Aboriginal peoples seem to "disappear" from the narrative. This interspersed inclusion of them in textbooks is seen most at the Grade 11 level. In general, Aboriginal peoples are included with a few images and brief descriptions of their participation in the world wars, especially the individual heroism of Tommy Longboat and Francis Pegahmagabow in World War I, and Tommy Prince in World War II (see Bolotta et al., 2000; Fielding& Evans, 2001; Smith, McDevitt, & Scully, 1996; and Cruxton & Wilson, 2000). A few textbooks provide a glimpse of life on reservations during the 1920s and 1930s, although focusing mostly on their poverty: "Social and economic conditions on reserves were poor, and many who sought employment in the cities faced discrimination and hostility" (Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 69). Other topics covering Aboriginal peoples in the 20th Century usually include residential schooling (experiences and redress), voting and Aboriginal rights, land claims, and self-government. Despite their active participation throughout the 20th Century, textbooks have excluded them. Their absence and, in effect, "invisibility" become an accepted part of the curriculum, leaving students to wonder, "Where did Aboriginal peoples go? What were they doing?" The gaps may lead to an inaccurate conclusion that Aboriginal peoples have not

"progressed" and therefore have remained essentially static throughout the century, with the same attire, same beliefs, same ceremonies, same traditions, and same issues.

Second, a number of narratives are misappropriated, particularly in the Cranny series. In an attempt to include Aboriginal viewpoints, the authors use fictional stories to introduce a unit; however, the voice of Aboriginal peoples is missing. As an introduction to "The Northwest to 1870", a Métis girl narrates a story (entitled, "I Am Anne-Marie Lepine") to the readers about life in the Red River region:

> At night, when all are asleep, we go near their homes, and fire off guns and shout at irregular intervals, so that the dogs bark wildly and everyone in the family wakes up . . .
>
> We also set fire to the colonists' barns and burn their crops. This also disturbs me because destroying food will mean starvation for these people in the winter. It is terrible to see the smoke rising from the colonists' fields. At these times, it saddens me that we can't live together in peace . . .
>
> Last month, the killing started . . . The colonists are farmers, not soldiers, and they stood no chance against our skilled hunters. My father says that the colonists were all killed within a quarter of an hour, and their bodies still lie out on the prairie. . .
>
> While I am sad that killing took place . . . I have a new respect for what is rightfully ours, and declared that this is our land, for all time. (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999, pp. 127-128)

This image is reinforced with a painting depicting two fleeing Métis on horseback with a torch raised in their hand (see Figure 4.20).

(Figure 4.20 – Métis on horseback. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny, Jarvis, Moles & Seney, 1999, p. 128.)

In the background, viewers see a burning barn, assumingly set ablaze by the Métis while settlers are depicted watching or attempting to shoot at the Métis (p. 128). Not only does this story appear as an apologetic narrative that assumes a Métis perspective, it shows them as

violently aggressive. Similarly, in presenting the myth, "Why the Salmon Came to Squamish Waters", the authors do not clarify from whose perspective the story is written (see Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, pp. 182-184). Unintentionally yet effectually, the textbook has misrepresented and misappropriated these stories as authentic to Aboriginal culture and therefore do not give voice to the original authors of such narratives.

By decontextualizing Aboriginal peoples, textbooks have inadvertently denied their identity -- culturally, spiritually, and historically. Their exclusion from the main accounts in the textbooks does not recognize fully the contributions they have made and continue to make in Canadian society. Textbooks should promote the knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal peoples by giving them voice not only in image but in text as well. Despite these criticisms, however, the textbooks do show sensitivity to them: they challenge some of the traditional images; they do include some positive images; and they attempt to have greater inclusion of Aboriginal peoples and issues.

Challenging Traditional Images of Aboriginal Peoples

In challenging traditional images, textbooks ask students to think critically about the images and possible biases presented. In *Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations*, a sketch of the Vikings' violent interaction with Aboriginal peoples, the authors notes that such a depiction is often romanticized, stating in its caption, "the illustration is also misleading" and asks, "Does this picture help us understand the history of the Vikings in North America in any way?" (Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 218; see Figure 4.21).

(Figure 4.21 – Romanticizing Viking history. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cranny & Jarvis, 1998, p. 218.)

Students are asked to examine the image more closely and not accept it as plain "truth", but through critical thinking it can be analyzed for a better understanding of the reasons behind the depiction, especially in uncovering its propagandic intentions.

Similarly, in a sketch that depicts the execution of Thomas Scott, the image, if left on its own, would portray the Métis as heartless and brutal people as Scott lies there bound, blindfolded, and shot (see Figure 4.22).

(Figure 4.22 – "Execution of Thomas Scott". Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cruxton & Wilson, 1997, p. 107)

However, on the margin, questions are posed to students that encourage dialogue and discussion surrounding point of view and bias: "What impression does the picture give of the execution? Do you think it was drawn by a supporter or opponent of Riel?" (Cruxton & Wilson, 1997, p. 107). The text also explains that Scott "was in jail on a charge of taking up arms against Riel's government, struck his guards, called the Métis a pack of cowards, insulted their Roman Catholic religion, and threatened to murder Riel" (p. 107). In a similar account in *Horizons: Canada Moves West*, Scott is described as "the most belligerent member of the Canadian Party. In prison, Scott loudly publicized his anti-Métis views, verbally and physically abused his guards, and threatened the life of Louis Riel" (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles, & Seney, 1999, p. 161). The language of the text is strongly against Scott as the textbooks depict him as the "villain", which in itself can be a point of discussion and debate. As a result, the traditional image of a violent and aggressive Métis executing Scott is somewhat muted.

Images of residential schools tend to depict changes from what Aboriginal children looked like before (traditional attire looking savage and primitive) and after (Western attire looking civilized). However, the photograph of an Aboriginal traditional-looking father (Quewich) posing with his Westernized-looking children challenges the status quo in which

the caption reads, "This kind of photograph was used to promote residential schools. What message would it send to White Canadians? To Canada's Native peoples?" (Fielding & Evans, 2001, p. 100; see Figure 4.23). In another before-and-after photograph of an Aboriginal child, the authors write in the caption that such photographs "were commonly used to illustrate the supposed benefits of the residential school experience. How do these photographs summarize the purpose of the residential school system?" (Francis et al., 1998, p. 76; see Figure 4.24). Both of these photographs demonstrate that images can be challenged in their presentation and historic intent. Students can then question the meaning(s) and purpose(s) behind each image for a better historical and cultural understanding of Aboriginal peoples.

(Figure 4.23 – Father with his Westernized children. Figure removed for copyright reasons Original source found in Fielding & Evans, 2001, p. 100.)

(Figure 4.24 – Transformation of Thomas Moore. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Francis et al., 1998, p. 76.)

Positive Images of Aboriginal Peoples

In presenting more positive images of Aboriginal peoples, textbooks can begin to challenge negative stereotypes and portrayals. A number of such depictions are found in each textbook that show Aboriginal peoples in contemporary settings without the trappings of being overly "traditional". For example, in a section entitled, "Native Peoples Find Solutions", a photograph shows an air transport service in northern Quebec run by a First Nations group where the text states, "The best solutions are those that come from the Native peoples themselves, rather than from the government" (Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 158). The image of Aboriginal peoples has therefore "progressed" beyond traditional stereotypes: they are not frozen in the past.

Focusing on the positives and the solutions rather than the problem, this particular section of the textbook aims to provide a balance in portraying Aboriginal peoples. In the same chapter of the textbook, a section on "Native Contributions" states that the "Native peoples are an important part of Canada's founding heritage. They have made many contributions to Canadian life" (p. 165). Along with this text is a photograph of a scene from a play, "Diary of a Crazy Boy", written by John McLeod and directed by Tomson Highway and Rene Highway of Native Earth Performing Arts. Entering the world of the western "theatre", Aboriginal peoples can demonstrate to others that they are not the "Other" (see Figure 4.25).

(Figure 4.25 – Scene from "Diary of a Crazy Boy". Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Cruxton & Walker, 1993, p. 165.)

In another textbook, three photographs depict contemporary lifestyles in which the caption reads: "Some aspects of Aboriginal culture have changed, but some traditions continue. What traditions are shown in these photos? What changes are shown?" (Smith, McDevitt, & Scully, 1995, p. 348; see Figure 4.26).

(Figure 4.26 – Contemporary Aboriginal life. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Smith, McDevitt, & Scully, 1995, p. 348.)

A balance is therefore needed between tradition and modernity. Textbooks should not ignore the traditional ways and cultures of Aboriginal peoples as they remain integral to

their being. However, incorporating images of Aboriginal peoples in textbooks that show contemporary life helps debunk the stereotype that Aboriginal peoples are only Aboriginal peoples if they wear certain clothing, if they sing, drum, and/or dance to certain traditional music, or if they perform certain spiritual or sacred ceremonies. Including more positive images of them in textbooks may help promote greater cross-cultural dialogue and understanding between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the classroom.

Inclusion and Integration of Aboriginal Peoples

Despite the Eurocentric narrative in these Social Studies textbooks, a significant step forward in Aboriginal education is the greater inclusion of Aboriginal peoples and issues in them. More important is that the inclusions are integrated into the main text as opposed to presenting them literally in the margins to be treated as "different" or "special". However, most important is that textbooks give voice to the Aboriginal peoples in the narratives told.

In *Canada: Face of a Nation*, the authors highlight Aboriginal participation in World War I into the main body of the text rather than in a marginalized box: "When war was declared the Canadian government did not anticipate many Aboriginal enlistments. . . . Many Aboriginal Canadians became accomplished snipers" (Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 52). Similarly, in a description of volunteering for World War II, the authors of *Canada: Our Century, Our Story* state that a "particularly large proportion of Native Canadians enlisted -- about 6000 in all" and mention the accomplishments of Officer William John Bolduc, an Ojibwa who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (Fielding & Evans, 2001, p. 185).

A few textbooks also recognize the paternalistic and forced assimilative nature of the federal government, admitting a "historic mistake":

> Relations between the Aboriginal nations and the government were paternalistic, with the government managing their children. After the resistance in 1885, the government had felt that paternalism was the only solution. . . . the Canadian government felt that the only solution to future resistance was to force assimilation on these Aboriginal people. The government wanted them to become like other Canadians in customs and viewpoint. (Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 7)
>
> Tragically, the Native people's historic contributions and achievements were undervalued and overshadowed by the growing and ambitious immigrant population. (Fielding & Evans, 2000, p. 18).

> Aboriginal peoples are an important part of our early national experiences. . . . In true ethnocentric and Eurocentric fashion, the French and English disregarded the cultures of the Aboriginal peoples. . . .
>
> The government was misled by ethnocentrism and racist assumptions. It believed that European culture was superior, and by adopting it, the First Nations would improve their lives. (Smith, McDevitt, & Scully, 1996, pp. 3, 33, 110)

By acknowledging the omissions and commissions of the past, textbooks can begin to give agency to Aboriginal peoples as opposed to passive victims. Furthermore, although small and highly selective, the incorporation of personal accounts, literature, and art from Aboriginal peoples in the textbooks provides a voice to a once unvoiced, unheard, and silenced peoples in the making of Canadian history.

One of the more famous Aboriginal spokespersons is Chief Dan George, Chief of the Squamish Band of Burrard Inlet from 1951 to 1963, who became an actor committed to portraying Aboriginal characters more positively and breaking mainstream stereotypes. An excerpt of his thoughts on Aboriginal peoples and the modern world entitled, "My Heart Soars", is provided in *Canada: Face of a Nation*:

> For thousands of years
> I have spoken the language of the land
> and listened to its many voices.
> I took what I needed
> and found there was plenty for everyone.
> The rivers were clear and thick with life,
> the air was pure and gave way
> to the thrashing of countless wings.
> On land, a profusion of creatures abounded.
> I walked tall and proud
> knowing the resourcefulness of my people,
> feeling the blessings of the Supreme Spirit.
> I lived in the brotherhood of all beings.
> I measured the day
> by the sun's journey across the sky.
> The passing of the year was told
> by the return of the salmon
> or the birds pairing off to nest.
> Between the first campfire and the last
> of each day I searched for food,
> made shelter, clothing, and weapons,
> and always found time for prayer.

The wisdom and eloquence of my father
I passed on to my children,
so they too acquired faith,
courage, generosity, understanding,
and knowledge in the proper way of living.
Such are the memories of yesterday!
Today, harmony still lives in nature,
though we have less wilderness,
less variety of creatures.
Fewer people know the cougar's den in the hills,
nor have their eyes followed
the eagle's swoop, as he writes endless
circles into the warm air.
(Chief Dan George, as cited in Bolotta et al., 2000, p. 292).

Although the selection reflects on the past as how life was like, it does offer a glimmer of hope where "harmony still lives in nature". Chief Dan George eloquently reflects on his people and their relationship to the land; yet, at the same time, he avoids attacking the colonial past. Rita Joe, a member of the Eskasoni First Nations known for her experiential poems, is also quoted in one of the textbooks. In "Lost My Talk", she recounts her life in residential school and expresses the disheartening struggle to keep her language and identity:

I lost my talk
The talk you took away
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.
    You snatched it away;
    I speak like you
    I think like you
    I create like you
    The scrambled ballad, about my word.
Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.
    So gently I offer my hand and ask,
    Let my find my talk
    So I can teach you about me.
(Rita Joe, as cited in Cranny & Moles, 2001, p. 212).

By giving voice to Aboriginal peoples in textbooks, poems like these do not mis-represent or misappropriate them. Regardless of differing messages, experiences, and

sentiments, both of these excerpts provide a venue for Aboriginal peoples to express themselves openly and honestly. However, usually the textbooks surveying the 20th Century would include these works, mostly because Aboriginal peoples come from an oral traditional where written history was not recorded. Thus, the only written primary sources during that time would come from literate Europeans. In addition to the pieces of literature, fine arts in the form of portraits, sculptures, paintings, architectural designs, and music, are all profiled in textbooks (e.g., painter Daphne Odig, playwright Tomson Highway, architect Douglas Cardinal, master carver Bill Reid, classical musician John Kim Bell, and singer/musician Susan Aglukark (see Cranny & Moles, 2001, pp. 211-212 for examples).

By presenting more inclusive and positive images of Aboriginal peoples that both challenge the traditional images and give them a voice, textbooks can take a step toward acknowledging and accepting Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology. In turn, textbooks can also promote greater understanding of Aboriginal cultures as they provide a different perspective of the historical and contemporary events and issues in Canadian society.

Concluding Remarks

The recommended Social Studies 9 to 11 textbooks examined in this study mostly cover the prescribed learning outcomes as directed by the provincial ministry. As the curricula themselves primarily focus on a Eurocentric narrative, the recommended textbooks are also written within that perspective, leaving Aboriginal peoples and issues mostly on the side.

The recommended textbooks in general are inconsistent in portraying images of Aboriginal peoples. At times, textbooks marginalize their image by not recognizing their contributions historically and currently. At times, they essentialize them by overgeneralizing and "freezing" them in time. At times, they see them as a problem by portraying them as violent and aggressive, emphasizing particular conflicts. At times, they decontextualize them by isolating or even overlooking them in the historical narrative. Yet, despite these criticisms, textbooks are showing more positive images and having greater inclusion of Aboriginal peoples. They occasionally challenge the status quo by asking students to think more critically and not accept given images and portrayals so readily. They occasionally present positive images of Aboriginal peoples without the potential danger of stereotyping

their traditional ways. They do include greater voice for Aboriginal peoples as they express their own personal experiences and sentiments of their “Aboriginalness”, especially through art, literature, and music.

In presenting images of Aboriginal peoples, textbooks need to contextualize them for students and allow them to think critically for a balanced perspective. Also important is using materials and resources beyond the textbook produced by Aboriginal peoples: “Only when literature written by First Nations and art produced by First Nations artists become part of the curriculum and are found in all subject areas will students begin to recognized that there is far more to being First Nations than beads and feathers and that our identity is not something that can be pulled on and off like a pair of jeans” (Fletcher, 2000, p. 354). Incorporating Aboriginal peoples as agents of history with their voice is therefore needed not only in textbooks but also in the curriculum:

> Finding traces of ourselves in the stories is a source of affirmation. . . . In the process of affirming our connections we are responding as members of the First Nations community: asserting our collective right and our responsibility to accomplish representation. The stories of our ancestors make a claim on us, and in turn, we are called upon to share the stories with others. We have a responsibility both to ourselves and our ancestors to take up the project of (re)telling. . . .
>
> It was and continues to be the violence of colonization that created conditions wherein Aboriginal people lost the power to control the ways in which dominant society constructs and interprets images of Aboriginal people. (Dion, 2004, p. 65)

Although the Grade 9 to 11 Social Studies courses attempt to integrate Aboriginal peoples more into the curricula, they continue to be based on a colonial past. Greater inclusion of them within the main narrative is therefore needed. In creating and developing a new course, BC First Nations Studies 12, the provincial government has provided an opportunity for all students to learn in greater depth and breadth about Aboriginal peoples and issues from various Aboriginal voices.

CHAPTER 5
BC FIRST NATIONS STUDIES 12
COURSE AND TEXTBOOK

The Ministry of Education first introduced BC First Nations Studies 12 as a provincially approved and credited course in 1995. During the last decade, there have been two revisions to the course's Integrated Resource Package -- one in 2000 and one in 2006.[36] To fulfill graduation requirements, students must take at least one provincially examinable senior Social Studies course (Social Studies 11, Civics 11, or BC First Nations Studies 12). In exploring BC First Nations Studies 12, this chapter examines the latest prescribed learning outcomes as established in the latest Integrated Resource Package (2006).[37] Images and representations of Aboriginal peoples in the recommended textbook, *BC First Nations Studies*, as approved by the Surrey School District, are also examined.[38]

Overview of BC First Nations Studies 12 – The Course

Although some of the content and foci have changed over the years as historical developments continue to influence and shape the political landscape of Aboriginal peoples in the province, the rational throughout this time has remained the same. BC First Nations Studies 12 still focuses on the

> diversity, depth, and integrity of the cultures of British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples . . . emphasizing the languages, cultures, and history of First Nations peoples. . . .
>
> [The] course provides an opportunity for BC students to acquire knowledge and understanding of the traditions, history, and present realities of BC Aboriginal peoples, as well as a chance to consider future challenges and opportunities.

---

[36] The scope of this particular chapter, however, is not to compare the past IRPs to the present one, although reference to those in 2000 and 1995 will be made.

[37] At the time of this study, the new IRP for BC First Nations Studies 12 was officially adopted (2006), replacing its 2000 version and is to be fully implemented in the 2007/2008 school year.

[38] The same criteria as in the last chapter will be used to examine the images and portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in textbooks (Dillabough and McAlpine's study and the Ministry of Education's evaluation guide). I also use these criteria to discuss the rationale and philosophy behind the course as they are as relevant to curricular development as to textbook evaluation.

> [It] will help to promote understanding of First Nations peoples among all students. A curriculum that concentrates on Aboriginal content can lead to enlightened discussion of Aboriginal issues and can also contribute to Aboriginal students' sense of place and belonging in the public school system. (BC Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 3)

In addition to the rationale of the course, the Integrated Resource Package also provides the Ministry's philosophy of the course, which includes eight descriptors about Aboriginal peoples and their cultures, values, beliefs, traditions, history, languages, and land:

1. Aboriginal peoples have complex, dynamic, evolving cultures that have adapted to changing world events and environments. Aboriginal peoples' values and beliefs are diverse, durable, and relevant.
2. It is necessary to understand and appreciate that all contemporary events have their roots in both oral and written history in order to understand Aboriginal issues.
3. Language and land are the foundations of Aboriginal identity and culture.
4. Aboriginal views of knowledge and learning may differ from those of other societies.
5. The resilience and durability of Aboriginal cultures serve as a basis upon which Aboriginal peoples can build a brighter future.
6. Aboriginal culture and history have an integral place in the evolution of BC and Canadian society.
7. Aboriginal peoples play a key role in the determination of future prosperity in BC, Canada, and the world.
   (BC Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 4)

With these beliefs and intentions, BC First Nations Studies 12, as a course, follows the criteria of the Ministry mainly because it is grounded within an Aboriginal focus and perspective, which is not commonly found in standard history textbooks. It avoids treating Aboriginal peoples as a multicultural group, making overgeneralizations, and perpetuating negative stereotypes, and, in doing so, acknowledges and affirms Aboriginal identity.

Though the course and corresponding recommended textbook focus on First Nations peoples in BC, the Métis are still referenced and the term "Aboriginal" is used when discussing rights and titles (see Index of *BC First Nations Studies*). The course itself is based on four main themes: 1) land and relationships, 2) contact, colonialism, and resistance, 3) cultural expressions, and 4) leadership and self-determination. Each of these themes in turn contains specific prescribed learning outcomes. In land and relationships, the course attempts to bridge historical and contemporary First Nations societies by examining the

traditional relationships with the land and the natural world. Moreover, students are expected to 1) describe the location of the traditional territories of BC First Nations peoples, 2) analyze their relationship with the natural world, 3) explain the importance of traditional education with respect to land and relationships, and 4) analyze the exchange of ideas, practices, and materials involving First Nations pre-contact and post-contact (BC Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 18). In contact, colonialism, and resistance, students are to 1) demonstrate knowledge of the origins and history of the Métis, 2) assess the economic, social, political, and cultural impacts of contact with Europeans, 3) analyze post-Confederation government policies and jurisdictional arrangements that affected and continue to affect BC First Nations, and 5) analyze the varied and evolving responses of First Nations peoples to contact (p. 18). In cultural expressions, students are expected to 1) explain the functions and significance of the oral tradition, 2) explain the significance of First Nations creation, origin, and trickster/transformer stories, 3) interpret literature by Aboriginal authors, 4) explain the significance of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art objects, and 5) evaluate the importance for Aboriginal peoples to determine the use of their artistic traditions and historical artifacts (p. 19). In leadership and self-determination, the course focuses on Aboriginal identity and political developments in the process of self-government and self-determination where students are expected to 1) describe the challenges during the 20th century, including reference to Aboriginal veterans, Aboriginal women, Métis, Aboriginal leaders and organizations, 2) compare traditional and contemporary First Nations systems of governance, and 3) analyze contemporary legislation, policies, and events affecting the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples (p. 19).

These descriptions and prescriptions show a much greater depth in the knowledge and comprehension of Aboriginal peoples -- their histories, their cultures, their governments, their identities -- than in the prescribed learning outcomes about Aboriginal peoples in the Social Studies curricula. The main difference is not only because the course inherently has greater Aboriginal content, but also it has a different viewpoint that gives voice to the Aboriginal peoples. Moreover, according to Marker (2000), "without showing respect for the local history, language, and traditions of the place where they are studying, Native students can internalize a generic image of what it means to be an Aboriginal person. This

can increase their sense of alienation and marginalization. It is the distinctiveness of the local sense of place that animates meaning and ideology from an Indigenous perspective".

BC First Nations Studies 12, however, has not escaped its share of controversy, skepticism, and even resistance. Because BC First Nations Studies 12 is now a provincially examinable course, teachers and students feel certain pressures and expectations as the government publicizes the performance statistics of these examination results.[39] The main debate among some teachers, however, is that students may take BC First Nations Studies 12 to fulfill their senior Social Studies requirement in the Graduation Program as opposed to the standard Social Studies 11.[40] As such, some teachers feel this course to be a "threat" to Social Studies 11 and strongly believe that students should be required to take a survey course of 20th Century Canada as opposed to one that focuses only on Aboriginal history and issues. Even the BC's Social Studies Provincial Specialists Association was

> so strong in its condemnation of FNS 12 [First Nations Studies] as a substitute for SS [Social Studies] 11 that a committee was struck to revise the curriculum, a committee comprised of social studies teachers and Aboriginal educators. Apparently, the SSPSA [Social Studies Provincial Specialist Association] thought that the PLOs [prescribed learning outcomes] of the original FNS 12 curriculum did not have enough overlap with the SS 11 curriculum. The revised FNS 12 curriculum is considered to be a reflection of the concerns raised by the SSPSA. In other words, it appears to be more in keeping with the colour-blind yet subtly Eurocentric revised curricula. (Orlowski & Menzies, 2004, pp. 68-69)

Despite this curriculum controversy and regardless of its "examinable status", BC First Nations Studies 12 is the only course that truly gives voice to Aboriginal peoples. Students may assume that the course is intended for Aboriginal students, but because the course is open to all students irrespective of their background, it has one of the best potentials to provide opportunities for dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Perhaps having such a course may lead to greater cross-cultural understanding and respect in and out of the classroom.

---

[39] The provincial examination for BC First Nations Studies 12 is worth 20% of the overall grade (the same value as the examination for Social Studies 11) and is mandatory for all students.

Textbook Images of Aboriginal Peoples in BC First Nations Studies 12

The Integrated Resource Package for BC First Nations Studies 12 (2006) only lists one recommended comprehensive resource -- *BC First Nations Studies*. In its proposal to develop a resource for the provincial ministry, Pacific Educational Press ensured that its textbook would follow closely to the IRP's prescribed learning outcomes. Not only would the textbook be issue-oriented, it would "strongly recognize that the land and its resources and the languages of the First Nations peoples are the foundations of their cultures and heritage (Edwards, 2000, p. 5). Not only does this particular textbook address all the prescribed learning outcomes, it fulfills them in a positive way using local Aboriginal knowledge.

BC First Nations Studies – The Textbook

In its preface, *BC First Nations Studies* claims to document the "history and cultures of First Nations and Métis people in British Columbia from before the arrival of Europeans to the present" (Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 7). Because the focus is on the First Nations peoples, their inclusion and validation not only in the textbook but also in the Social Studies strand are significant in which "Aboriginal people's contributions to British Columbia and Canada are highlighted, and important leaders and role models are profiled" (p. 7). This recognition is further demonstrated with the introduction and epilogue written by two Aboriginal individuals who each reflect on the challenges Aboriginal communities face as they regain their place as self-governing nations.

One of the most important aspects of this recommended textbook is the legitimized voices of and decolonized approach toward Aboriginal peoples. The "Introduction" incorporates "The Voice of the Land is Our Language" (see pp. 8-15) and speaks from a First Nations' perspective, emphasizing their values and beliefs within their cultures:

> First Nations people in British Columbia have enduring values and beliefs that are as relevant today as they were in the past. We have a great responsibility to protect not only our families, but also the land in which we live. Families are responsible for maintaining a connection to the land, to honour and respect the way we live today, and to remember our past. First Nations' histories

---

[40] These sentiments were voiced in an informal discussion among the Social Studies department heads in Surrey during a district meeting where teachers shared their reluctance to and, in some instances, rejection of the course.

> impart a sense of belonging and a way of holding on to the values that sustain us. Instilled within our languages are the ties to the land, family, community, and the great respect and honour we have for all nations. (Reid, as cited in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 8)

This opening paragraph sets the tone for the rest of the textbook: the narrative remains focused on Aboriginal perspectives using Aboriginal voices.

Each of the profiles and case studies throughout the textbook provides greater breadth and depth of Aboriginal experiences. A quotation from Chief Gweh as recorded by a North West Company agent regarding the fur trade in 1811 provides such a salient example in the textbook:

> You [North West Company agent] send a great way off for goods, and you are rich and want for nothing. But do not I manage my affairs as well as you do yours? . . . When it is the proper season to hunt the beaver, I kill them; and of their flesh I make feasts for my relations. I, often, feast all the Indians of my village; and, sometimes, invite people from afar off, to come and partake of the fruits of my hurts. I know the season when fish spawn, and then send my women, with the nets which they have made, to take them. I never want for anything, and my family is always well clothed. (as cited in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p, 74)

In another documented primary source, the text provides an address by Chief Neeshot of the Tsimshian to an employee of the North West Agency in 1883:[41]

> We are living in peace for this reason, that this Tsimshian tribe belongs to no government. God has put us here Himself. That is why our minds are at peace, for we know God is the only one who governs us. We have heard that the government has appointed you here. You have told us yourself that the land belongs to us the Tsimshians. (as cited in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 93)

The historical written records of two First Nations chiefs by a European during a time when not many Aboriginal voices were even documented are significant here. Standard history textbooks tend to omit this type of narrative in their accounts of the Canadian fur trade. Taking BC First Nations Studies 12 and reading this textbook, therefore, informs and enlightens students more.

---

[41] Again, this documentation and quotation is one that is often overlooked in most history textbooks. BC First Nations Studies, therefore, becomes a unique and invaluable source for and of Aboriginal history.

Of equal and perhaps even greater importance are the recognition and challenge to the colonial history of Canada. In "Legacy of Colonialism", the authors provide a balanced and reflexive view of Canada's colonized history:

> Five hundred years of European settlement in the Americas is painfully and tragically represented in any number of statistics, such as high rates of suicide, un-and under-employment, and substance abuse. This is not to deny impressive and important examples of successful First Nations people. Rather, it underlines the fact that the social inequality experienced by First Nations people is directly linked to the processes of colonization and to the government policies directed at undermining Aboriginal institutions and social organization. . . .
>
> The journey of First Nations people is not over by any means. There are many significant challenges facing them today and communities are working to heal from the legacies of colonialism through social programs, education, and revitalization of language and culture. (p. 148)

Thus, the textbook not only acknowledges a colonial history but also challenges it. It not only acknowledges Indigenous knowledge, traditions, languages, and cultures but also applies them. It not only acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and histories but also embraces and accepts them.

Visually, the textbook provides both historic and contemporary images and photographs of Aboriginal peoples and their environment and issues and concerns. Although some of them are found in other Social Studies textbooks, they are better contextualized to give more in-depth explanations to them without having Aboriginal peoples essentialized and seen as a problem.

In documenting the various historic photographs in the textbook, many cite a time frame so that students are not misguided into thinking and believing that such lifestyles or conditions continue to exist for Aboriginal peoples. In the photograph of a young woman from Hagwilget Canyon weaving lynx strips, the accompanying caption states that it was taken around 1897 when there was an "abundance of fur-bearing animals in the northern interior" which "led the people to develop skills in making clothing from furs" (p. 30; see Figure 5.1).

(Figure 5.1 – Woman weaving lynx strips c. 1897. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 30.)

Similarly, a photograph of household goods assembled in preparation for a potlatch in Alert Bay is dated approximately 1910 (see Figure 5.2). The photograph's caption gives further explanation to the potlatch which contextualizes the image for students: "When a chief distributes gifts, he is publicly repaying his debts, while at the same time he is investing for the future. A chief who gives away resources can fully expect to receive the same value back with interest at another feast held in the future" (p. 57). The textbook, in providing such accompanying contexts to the images of Aboriginal peoples, avoids freezing and hence stereotyping them in time.

(Figure 5.2 – Preparation for a potlatch in Alert Bay, c. 1910. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies & Peacock, 2003, p. 57.)

Many of the images presented of Aboriginal peoples in this textbook, however, are contemporary photographs. Even within the historical units of the textbook, the authors have interspersed current photographs to connect the past to the present. For example, most of the chapter, "Living on the Land", discusses the historic ways Aboriginal peoples adapted and managed the land; however, a contemporary photograph of a member of the Stó:lo Nation

shows that a connection to the land is still an integral part of life (see Figure 5.3). Also, the attire that is stereotypically associated with Aboriginal peoples with the traditional feathers, capes, masks, and even clan symbols is absent here; instead, it is complemented, not replaced, by a more westernized attire. A balance between tradition and modernization is also seen in the photograph where Gwen Point and Helen Joe of the Stó:lo Nation are "working with cedar bark, a traditional skill that has been passed down through many generations" and who still use storytelling to teach skills (p. 211; see Figure 5.4).

In depicting the cultural expressions of Aboriginal peoples, the authors of the textbook avoid misappropriating and essentializing their images. As the textbook explains: "Today, cultural expression is often a means of reasserting Aboriginal identity. By examining the wisdom of the past, Aboriginal artists in contemporary society are able to bring into focus their own cultural beliefs and values and express them both for their own people and for the wider Canadian society" (p. 208). A photograph of David Neel, a Kwakwaka'wakw artist, without explanation does perpetuate a stereotype of Aboriginal art through making masks (see Figure 5.5); however, the caption explains that the "Keeper of the Animal mask . . . is a representation of the endangered species of the world", which provides context to this particular cultural work. Students may in turn understand better the meaning behind the mask and not misinterpret it as just art.

(Figure 5.3 – Gwen Point of Stó:lo Nation collecting bark. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 35.)

(Figure 5.4 – Gwen Point and Helen Joe of Stó:lo Nation working with cedar bark. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 211.)

(Figure 5.5 – David Neel with his Keeper of the Animals mask. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 209.)

Although the textbook delves thoroughly into the historical and contemporary political and legal struggles of Aboriginal peoples, only a small handful are depicted and, even within this small amount, only two may be seen as negative. In a case study, "The Constitutional Express", the authors describe the mass protest in 1980 against the proposed changes to the constitution (see pp. 139-140). The two accompanying photographs do show Aboriginal peoples rallying and marching with placards in hand as a protest to Trudeau's proposed constitutional changes (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7). Yet, these are the only two photographs that show Aboriginal peoples marching and holding protest signs in public. In another photograph, a Gitx̱san Elder is seen quietly sitting, blocking a road through Gitx̱san territory in order to keep logging trucks from passing -- no signs, no violent look of protest, no aggressive behaviour (see Figure 5.8). Instead, the image depicted is one of solitude and peace. Similarly, in a photograph showing the Native Youth Movement, the participants are seen drumming and singing (see Figure 5.9). Although the textbook does state that in recent years, the Native Youth Movement has "emerged as a strong, militant voice for land claims and other issues" and has "proved their determination and defiance" against the encroachment of Native lands, the image is far from being overly aggressive.

(Figure 5.6 – 1980 mass protest against proposed changes to the constitution. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 139.)

(Figure 5.7 – same 1980 mass protest. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 140.)

(Figure 5.8 – Gitxan Elder blocking a road. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 146.)

(Figure 5.9 – Participants in Native Youth Movement. Figure removed for copyright reasons. Original source found in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 204.)

The selection of photographs in the textbook therefore is important in forming positive (or negative) images of Aboriginal peoples. *BC First Nations Studies* does not dwell on the negative aspects of self-government and treaty negotiations. Missing in this textbook are the photographs of masked "warriors" staring down Canadian soldiers, burning tires to block a road, and yelling, angry protestors, and impoverished reserves with high unemployment that are found in other Social Studies textbooks.

One main criticism of the textbook, therefore, is the absence of these images that are undeniably part of Aboriginal peoples' experiences. Perhaps the textbook purposely omits such negative visual images to counter the ones already existing in other textbooks. Understandably, the authors may have intended to raise students' awareness that such positive images and representations of Aboriginal peoples do exist and are part of reality as well. However, a balance is needed between positive and negative images of Aboriginal peoples and issues in order for students to become more critically aware and thoughtful of such situations. With contextual background, negative images may be used in more positive ways by explaining the different circumstances and illustrating the different realities.

The last chapter of *BC First Nations Studies* nevertheless captures the essence of how textbooks should portray Aboriginal peoples following the criteria of Dillabough and McAlpine and the Ministry of Education. Titled "Beyond Stereotypes: The Portrayal of First Nations People", the chapter challenges the stereotypes and offers "honest, thoughtful reflections" of the various cultures in the images that it presents:

> From the earliest days of European contact, First Nations cultures have been described in simplistic and stereotyped ways. When early explorers and traders, with predominantly British roots, encountered ways of life that were

> unfamiliar to them, they viewed First Nations people as "less than" and "other". . . .
>
> Some myths about First Nations people still exist in the popular culture of mainstream North American society. One is that they make up one homogenous group. . . Another is that their ancestors all wore feather headdresses, carried tomahawks, and lived in tipis. A third is that they are people of the past, that anything identifiable as Aboriginal culture belongs to the past, or if it is practiced today it is out of a romantic attachment to the past.
>
> None of these statements is true, and none refers to real people. The statements refer to some notion of "Indian" created by a society that consciously or subconsciously marginalized First Nations people. (Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 257)

Textbooks, in general, do not challenge the images of Aboriginal peoples by the media. This textbook takes an important step forward in not overly emphasizing the stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples. They are seen as dynamic as opposed to static, honouring not only the past but also the present. Contrary to the imaginary "Indian", the portrayal of Aboriginal peoples in this textbook is commendably "real".

Concluding Remarks

"As First Nations peoples we still have some distance to go to be free from the oppression we live under. . . . We can and must persist in our critique of Colonialism, but we cannot rely on Canada alone to give us more power. Power comes from within, and though we cannot expect that the most important victories we achieve will be from any other source but ourselves" (Borrows, as cited in Campbell, Menzies, & Peacock, 2003, p. 271). The "Epilogue" of the textbook centres on the future hope of an Aboriginal self-government. BC First Nations Studies 12 is a course that will help students understand the political, social, and economic contexts for this movement. As the course is intended to "document, recognize, and express [a] holistic perspective", it also provides an opportunity for students to examine the past, analyze the present, and consider possibilities for the future (BC Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 4).

The recommended textbook, *BC First Nations Studies*, not only follows the prescribed learning outcomes closely but it also follows the ministry's textbook criteria. First, it recognizes the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make and their diversity while avoiding traditional stereotypes. Second, it promotes a deeper

understanding of Aboriginal cultures. The textbook moves beyond the superficial trappings of “making masks, constructing totem poles and building replicas of Indian villages” (Fletcher, 2000, p. 353). Such activities, although they may entertain students about Aboriginal peoples, they do not provide any "true appreciation of the complexities of First Nations cultures" (p. 353). Instead, the textbook provides students with the values and philosophies of Aboriginal peoples. Third, it avoids focusing on victimizing the Aboriginal peoples and on essentializing them into traditional stereotypes. The images of Aboriginal peoples depicted in the textbook are for the most part culturally sensitive and affirming. In effect, both the BC First Nations Studies 12 course and its corresponding textbook place the Aboriginal peoples first, allowing their voices, knowledge, experiences, and wisdom to be heard.

CHAPTER 6
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION:
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT

In exploring Aboriginal education at the provincial level, this chapter first examines various ministry reports, policy implementation, and resources as a general background to and snapshot of its current state and direction within British Columbia. The chapter then provides an overview of the Surrey School District's corresponding reports on Aboriginal education as well as a description of its existing Aboriginal programs, serving as a background to the interviews in the following chapter.

Ministry of Education Overview

British Columbia's Ministry of Education is responsible for the education of approximately 665,000 public and private Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. Annually, it compiles and publishes a number of reports and policies. The following sections provide a brief overview of (i) the current performance of Aboriginal students, (ii) ministry strategies and initiatives to assist Aboriginal students, and (iii) recent ministry policies regarding Aboriginal education.

Assessing the Climate

Since the mid-1990s, the Ministry of Education began to collect data in order to track BC's self-identified Aboriginal students demographically, academically, and even behaviourally in its annual publication, *Aboriginal Report - How Are We Doing?*.[42] Its primary purposes are to help improve the understanding of "public school system performance in relation to Aboriginal students" and to provide a context for examining Aboriginal student performance and improvement (Morin, 2004, p. 194).

Demographically, the enrolled number and percentage of Aboriginal students in the province has steadily increased from 1995 to 2006: from 35, 755 (5.9%) to 57,229 (9.5%)

---

[42] According to the Ministry of Education, Aboriginal students are self-identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry, which include First Nations status and non-status, Métis, and Inuit.

respectively (BC Ministry of Education, 2006g, p. 1). The report further details the number of Aboriginal students by gender, on or off reserve, region, and population of Aboriginal enrollment compared to non-Aboriginal students. Academically, the report uses results from the Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA for Grades 4 and 7), Participation and Success Rates in various Grade 12 provincial examinations, and Number of Aboriginal Graduates Receiving a Dogwood / Completion Rate.[43] Socially, the report mainly focuses on comparing the percentage between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students identified in Special Education, Special Education Behaviour Disabilities Group, and Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Special Education Category.

According to the report, there continues to be an overrepresentation of Aboriginal students in the Behaviour Disabilities group in the 2005/06 school year: 3% of Aboriginal students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 (compared to 1% of non-Aboriginal students); 5% of Aboriginal students from Grades 4 to 7 (compared to 2% of non-Aboriginal students); 5% of Aboriginal students from Grades 8 to 10 (compared to 2% of non-Aboriginal students); and 6% of Aboriginal students from Grades 11 to 12 (compared to 2% of non-Aboriginal students) (p. 7). More startling, however, are the comparative statistics for "ungraded" elementary and secondary Aboriginal students to non-Aboriginal students who have behaviour disabilities: 39% of Aboriginal students who are ungraded at the elementary level (compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal students); and 26% of Aboriginal students who are ungraded at the secondary level (compared to 7% of the non-Aboriginal students) (p. 7).[44] As for graduation rates, the publication reports that only 47% of Aboriginal students obtained their Dogwood Diploma as compared to 82% of non-Aboriginal students in the 2005/06 school year (p. 28).

However, even with "statistical evidence", the interpretations of these numbers and percentages prove inadequate, lacking specificity in definitions and explanations. In turn, they may be easily and dangerously mis-interpreted and overly interpreted, as no precautions

---

[43] More specifically, the Foundations Skills Assessment is a standardized test administered to Grades 4 and 7 on reading, writing, and numeracy. Grade 10 students no longer are assessed through the FSA; instead, they write provincial examinations for English, Science, and Math. As for the Dogwood Completion Rates, the Ministry of Education defines a student cohort by those who enroll in Grade 8 for the first time and within six years, complete secondary school to receive a Dogwood Diploma. The Ministry uses this cohort as an indicator of success.

or analysis are offered, especially in addressing the question, "How are we doing?". As such, the Ministry of Education has narrowly focused on academic performance and graduation rates as its primary indication and, hence, definition of "success". Nevertheless, the *Aboriginal Report - How Are We Doing?* (2005/06) does provide a snapshot of Aboriginal achievement and success, showing steady improvements.

Strategies and Initiatives

As a response in the mid-1990s to the issue of Aboriginal achievement, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with administrators and educators implemented a number of strategies and initiatives to improve the education of not only Aboriginal students but of all students. With regard to student achievement, the province introduced Accountability Contracts, District Reviews, Enhancement Agreements, the Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project, and an Aboriginal Support Worker's Handbook, all of which are interrelated and interconnected to form a cycle of accountability.

Accountability Contracts

Implemented in 2001 and written by local school boards, Accountability Contracts are wide in scope as they are to "articulate how the District's overarching efforts and directions link to and reflect annual school plans developed throughout the school community in support of student achievement" and are intended to "build a coherent process of collecting information related to student achievement, analyzing this information, developing plans for improvement, implementing the plans, reviewing results, and communicating with the public" (BC Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 3). They are based on the district's goals and objectives with an emphasis on performance indicators (evidence), performance targets (expected results), and achievement of performance targets (actual results) of students. As well, strategies specifying the "actions and activities, directed toward student learning in the classroom" and structures reflecting "the way the district has organized resources, time, personnel and organizational planning to support achievement of

[44] "Ungraded", according to the Ministry of Education, are students who are taking courses at the elementary or secondary level where the school personnel do not consider them to be in a specific grade level.

goals and objectives" are also reported and submitted annually to the Ministry of Education (2005, pp. 9, 10).

District Reviews

District Reviews, in turn, provide feedback and recommendations for further improvements to the school districts based on their Accountability Contracts. Using ten categories, an external review team assesses the school district.

1. Goals and objectives need to be clear in order to define a strong instructional focus.
2. The district's rationale is evaluated in which the district needs to have a thorough and connected set of reasons for the goals and objectives.
3. The district needs to collect and analyze data as "evidence".
4. Strategies should include focused and well-organized improvement plans.
5. Structures need to be in place in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives.
6. The district needs to show coherence that establishes a connection between school and district goals and objectives.
7. Dialogue and communication must be evident whereby relationships are developed to promote public dialogue about student achievement.
8. Parent involvement is encouraged and monitored.
9. The district needs to show strong leadership -- having a clear vision for and commitment to improving student achievement.
10. The district should be achieving results (i.e., showing improvements in student performance). (BC Ministry of Education, 2005).

Each category is assessed as "sustaining improvement", "meeting expectations", "approaching expectations", or "not yet". In essence, District Reviews are to ensure that the Accountability Contracts are "accountable".

Enhancement Agreements

In addition to emphasizing the importance of academic performance, Enhancement Agreements explicitly acknowledge and legitimize the integral role of Aboriginal peoples' traditional culture and languages in the development and success of Aboriginal students: they are "working agreement[s] between a school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education" that fundamentally requires school districts to "provide strong programs on the culture of local Aboriginal peoples on whose traditional territories the districts are located" (BC Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 8). More specifically, they provide

a framework for involving Aboriginal communities in the decision-making process, a "road map for helping schools effect a shift in focus towards performance-oriented Aboriginal education based on educational outcomes" and "mechanisms to dialogue with the schools, [and] the school district" (p. 8). In order to examine each district's progress, three indicators of assessing success are used: academic, cultural, and engagement. Academically, school districts use (1) the Foundations Skills Assessment results, (2) the rates of participation, success, transition, and relevancy of modified programs, and (3) report card grades, transition rates, and suspensions from school. Culturally, they use (1) the participation rates of school district officials, teachers, and students in cultural education, (2) the number of schools offering BC First Nations Studies 12 with corresponding participation and success rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, (3) the number of schools offering locally developed Aboriginal languages courses, (4) the extent to which the district has "fostered and implemented locally developed cultural learning opportunities", and (5) the extent to which "technology initiatives related to the particular needs and interests of Aboriginal students have been undertaken" (p. 23). With regard to engagement, school districts use (1) the extent to which Aboriginal students participate in extra-curricular activities and (2) increase in the "quantity and quality of interactions between family/caregivers and the [school]" (p. 9). With these goals and indicators implemented, Enhancement Agreements hope to increase the knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal culture, language, and history, and in turn facilitate better understanding of Aboriginal peoples.

Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project

Student achievement, however, is not an isolated process as parental involvement becomes a significant factor and influence. In a discussion paper entitled, "Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project" (July 30, 2002), a committee consisting of provincial ministry, parent advisory council, teacher, school board, and Aboriginal participants recognized the "significant disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parent engagement in BC schools" and thus called for greater Aboriginal parental involvement in the public education system (BC Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. ii). Through a survey of one hundred twenty Aboriginal Education Coordinators in seven school

districts across British Columbia, including Surrey, the committee identified four communication-related issues regarding school-Aboriginal parent engagement:[45]

> limited engagement of school staff with Aboriginal parents in activities such as Parent Advisory Committees and extra-curricular activities; teacher and Aboriginal parent dissatisfaction with school-parent communications; lack of teacher and administrator awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture; and distrust and antipathy expressed by Aboriginal parents of the public school system in their region. (p. ii)

With a key goal of increasing the "school success of Aboriginal students and to increase Aboriginal communities' satisfaction with the public school system", the document examines the state of Aboriginal involvement in the public schools, key barriers to Aboriginal parental involvement, current and "best" practices, and guiding principles for its enhancement (p. 5).

First, from the collected data (in 2002), 47% of the one hundred twenty Aboriginal Education Coordinators surveyed characterized the relationship between Aboriginal parents and the education system as being "good/positive" while 35% said "fair/improving/neutral" and 18% said "poor/negative", but only 18% to 27% of teachers were satisfied with the level of communication they have with Aboriginal parents (pp. 6, 7). The results speak volumes in terms of "satisfaction" where less than half of those surveyed have a positive attitude regarding a necessary and significant relationship between Aboriginal parents and the school system. Thus, communication between and among the coordinators, teachers, and parents has become (and should be) a priority in the province.

Second, the survey results point to a number of barriers to a healthy Aboriginal parent-school partnership: personal negative educational experiences; mis-understanding of language and educational jargon; lack of cultural awareness and non-value or under-value of Aboriginal culture within the school; poverty among Aboriginal families; lack of genuine engagement strategies by schools; intimidation factor; and the general negative nature of parental contact regarding students non-achievement or misbehaviour (see pp. 9-13). These barriers are deep-rooted as a legacy of residential schooling where parents from their own experiences may have negative views toward the formalized and institutionalized education system. In turn, these barriers to a more positive partnership between Aboriginal parents and

[45] Seven districts throughout BC were used in this research varing in size and location: Prince Rupert, Prince George, Fort St. John, Kelowna, Castlegar/Trail, Courtney/Comox, and Surrey.

schools pose a formidable challenge and need to be addressed at all levels -- from the ministry to the school boards to the administrators to the staff to the parents and to the students.

Third, the committee offers four guiding principles to consider before implementing any policy or program. Respect for and celebration of Aboriginal culture are essential elements of an engagement strategy where increasing the knowledge and understanding of teachers and administrators about Aboriginal history, culture, and issues would better facilitate effective communication with Aboriginal parents. Schools need to be "welcoming and friendly" with an "open-doorway" policy where "parental input is welcome and that there is a special place for Aboriginal students and parents in the school" (p. 29). Parents, staff, and district leadership need to work cooperatively to "create a sense of belonging" and build trust (p. 29). Finally, measurable and realistic targets need to be set and assessed for their effectiveness.

Fourth, noted by the committee as initiatives to enhance Aboriginal parent engagement in the educational system, a number of activities have been implemented in various districts, including establishing an Aboriginal Education Committee or Department within the school district, offering Aboriginal Support Services, providing school orientation activities for Aboriginal parents and families, and inviting parents as participants in cultural awareness and culturally inclusive activities. In addition to these initiatives, the committee highlighted what it considers to be "best practices" in establishing effective strategies for both Aboriginal students and parents: engaging parents in the decision-making process as being "partners" in the education of Aboriginal students; building trust with parents for better communication; recognizing and addressing Aboriginal issues and culture; and recruiting Aboriginal staff in instructional and leadership positions as positive role models. The committee, however, cautions that one strategy will not "fit all" as regional differences must be considered and concludes that strategies to engage Aboriginal parents "require administrators and teachers to develop partner relationships with Aboriginal parents based on mutual respect and trust. These guiding principles should provide for establishing successful practices" (p. 30).

Aboriginal Support Worker's Handbook

To enhance the delivery of Aboriginal education to all students, the Ministry of Education published the *Aboriginal Support Worker's Handbook* (1997), applicable to locations where a staff position within the school district (i.e., Aboriginal Support Worker) was established. Although each school district has its own emphases on the responsibilities and duties of Aboriginal Support Workers, their main objective is to "assist Aboriginal students to achieve greater success in all school programs" (p. 7), as they work collaboratively with the district/school personnel (including teachers, counselors, and administrators), the community and its services, and parents/caregivers (see p. 13). Serving as role models, Aboriginal Support Workers in turn

> bring extensive formal training to their position but just as important are [their]life experiences and cultural heritage as an Aboriginal person. [Their] unique understanding and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, and needs of the students' Aboriginal community as well as the needs of the school system, make [them] a valuable asset to school staff. (p. 7)
>
> [They] are encouraged to empower Aboriginal students to succeed. . . . to be a facilitator for [students'] learning and to offer support, when needed, for self-esteem, self-identity, and cultural identity development . . . by offering warm, consistent, stable, and non-hostile environments and by being involved in the life experiences of the student. (p. 27)

Recent Policies

These ministry publications that promise greater accountability, involve greater parental involvement, and provide greater number of resources will hopefully result in an increase in awareness of the challenges, successes, and future of Aboriginal education among teachers, administrators, parents, and students.[46] The most recent and promising progress made (at the time of this study) is the Tripartite Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement formally signed between the federal and provincial governments and the Aboriginal peoples (through the First Nations Education Steering Committee) that will lead to the country's first recognition of First Nations' jurisdiction over Aboriginal education (BC Ministry of Education, 2006d). It is, in the words of BC's Premier, Gordon Campbell, "the

---

[46] Most of the Ministry of Education's documents examined in this section are found within the links of its Aboriginal Education website: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/.

first of its kind in Canada and is a major step toward our goal of closing the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians . . . . [that] marks the beginning of a new partnership" (as cited in BC Ministry of Education, 2006d, p. 1). The agreement, according to former federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jim Prentice, "will strengthen First Nations' capacity to exercise control over their educational systems and institutions" (as cited, p. 1). More importantly, it is "based on respect that recognizes the jurisdiction of First Nations peoples over the education of their youth" according to Chief Negotiator, Nathan Matthew (as cited, p. 1). With this formalized agreement in place, hope and optimism remain high in the future of Aboriginal education in BC.

Surrey School District Overview

Accommodating more than 64,000 students, the Surrey School District is the largest and fastest growing in BC with ninety-nine elementary schools, eighteen secondary schools, five learning centres, and one home learner program (on-line education -- Surrey Connect). It is also one of the most diverse districts culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically. Approximately 25% of students attending school in the district are from a household whose first language is not English, and approximately 20% of the overall student population, which represent over 90 different languages, receive instruction in ESL. Over 5,000 students (8%) come from families on income assistance. Approximately 2,600 (4%) of the total district enrollment are self-identified Aboriginal students (see BC Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 1).[47] Although the number of self-identified Aboriginal students in Surrey was small, an Aboriginal Department was created in 1998 to respond to the growing concern for their needs. From this department, a number of policies, programs, and initiatives were implemented focusing mainly on improving Aboriginal students' experiences, achievements, and success in the district.

---

[47] Parents self-identify their children as Aboriginal if one of the grandparent's lineage can be traced to an Aboriginal group, although the specific group does not need to be identified.

District Reports

Surrey has published a number of District Reports, including an annual Accountability Contract, District Review, and District Report. While the Accountability Contract projects into Surrey's future with goals and objectives until 2010, the District Report and Review reflect upon the quantifiable performance (i.e., achievement results) of the previous school year in the district.

Accountability Contract

In 2005, the Surrey School District outlined a comprehensive long-term plan for the five years, 2006-2010, based on four themes, known as "Vision 2010", in order to develop and improve students' academic achievement, community involvement, social and moral responsibilities, and future roles in society: (1) provide quality education programming where students will "experience a well-rounded educational program" with "access to a broad spectrum of educational . . . choices and timetable options" and "smooth transitions from preschool through post secondary"; (2) involve parents and community where there will be enhanced communication between schools, parents, and the community as well as participation of parents in the schools; (3) nurture "morally and socially responsible citizens" where students will "demonstrate respect, social responsibility and global citizenship"; and (4) prepare graduates for the "multiple roles of their futures" where students will be "knowledgeable about a broad range of post-secondary and career options" and will develop the "confidence and competence to be self-directed in pursuing their personal and career goals" (BC Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 2). More immediate, however, are the district's three main goals of improving reading skills, writing skills, and students' skills in social responsibility.

With regard to improving students' reading skills, the district "has consistently demonstrated lower than provincial averages in FSA results", and while "there has not been evidence of significant improvement in FSA results over the past five years, it is noted that there has been a consistently higher rate of participation of [its] ESL, Special Education and

Aboriginal students in comparison to the provincial average" (p. 5).[48] The report further states that while Aboriginal students continue to "perform at a lower achievement level than non-Aboriginal students in the district and provincially", they are "performing better than Aboriginal students provincially" (p. 8). As one of its strategies, Surrey's Aboriginal Education Department plans to continue to work collaboratively with Curriculum and Instructional Services to "ensure that Aboriginal students are included in district literacy interventions" where the primary focus is "academic support using culturally relevant materials" (p. 10).

With regard to improving students' writing skills, the district cites that its English 12 provincial examination results among Aboriginal students have "consistently been below the provincial average for the past 12 years" (p. 12)[49] and that the gap in performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is "evident" (p. 13). To address this concern, greater use of technology is being used to "enhance the quality and quantity of student writing" in twenty elementary schools (p. 14).[50]

With regard to improving students' skills in social responsibility, the district supports a wide range of initiatives that promote "safe and caring communities" (p. 16). Such programs include conducting (1) Secondary Student Forums where students discuss safety at school, bullying, racism, and substance abuse, (2) Secondary Student Safe Schools Surveys, and (3) Ministry Satisfaction Surveys.

In order to achieve these main immediate goals, the Surrey School District has targeted funds to provide "over and above" services for Aboriginal students: employing Aboriginal Child/Youth Care Workers, Educational Assistants, District Cultural Facilitators, Aboriginal Helping Teachers, and classroom teachers providing in-school support; offering after school programs that provide academic support for Aboriginal students; providing culturally relevant reading materials to support Aboriginal learners; and establishing the Elder in Residence Program to help build bridges between the school and the Aboriginal

---

[48] In addition to the FSA results, the district also uses report card data (English marks), the District Reading Assessment (RAD36) based on performance standards, and the English 10 provincial examination results as indicators /evidence.

[49] Although the report states that the district has been consistently below, the difference in average percentages is not high (approximately between 1-3% difference).

[50] Unfortunately, secondary schools do not receive this support.

community. Aboriginal Child/Youth Care Workers play a similar role to counselors in terms of ensuring a steady and encouraging transition from grade to grade, especially from elementary to secondary school. They also make parental contact when necessary and look after the well-being of Aboriginal students, not only academically, but also socially and emotionally as well. Educational Assistants are trained staff working with students with learning difficulties and act as a liaison between student and teacher in the classroom, focusing on academics. District Cultural Facilitators are responsible to facilitate students and teachers of the various and diverse Aboriginal cultures in order to improve the image of Aboriginal peoples and the cross-cultural responsiveness among and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Aboriginal Helping Teachers are trained staff from the district's Curriculum and Instruction Services Centre (CISC) who mainly assist and provide teachers with resources and lesson plans that pertain to Aboriginal peoples and issues. Upon request, they also may facilitate teachers in the classroom, but their focus is more on academic as opposed to cultural or emotional support.

District Review Report

> The District continues to face the challenges of rapid growth and increasing complexity. The rich diversity among the schools and program offerings in Surrey makes this district an exciting place to work and learn. The sense of purpose and teamwork displayed by Surrey School District will provide a strong foundation for its future efforts. (BC Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 2)

This excerpt from Surrey's District Review Report that was completed in 2004 expresses the importance of diversity, dynamism, and development within the schools. Through their observations, the review team focused on student achievement and concluded that there is a solid district leadership emphasis on student achievement with effective support by staff and helping teachers. As well, the review team noted teamwork between the district and the schools as they observed strong "commitment, professionalism, and dedication [among] educators in meeting the diverse needs of their learners" (p. 7). To reinforce and support student achievement, the team recommended that the district (1) "strengthen the culture of assessment for learning through the increased use of BC Performance Standards", (2) continue to "pursue ways of actively involving parents in the review of student achievement

data", (3) continue to "identify specific strategies to address the needs of Aboriginal students in school plans" and to work with the Aboriginal communities to develop an Enhancement Agreement, and (4) continue the "significant initiatives underway in order to deepen understanding of the powerful effects this work may yield for [its] students" (p. 8).

Annual District Report

Written by the Improving Student Learning Committee of the Surrey School District (mainly composed of the district's senior management and administrators), this twelfth annual district report highlights the progress made in attaining student achievement goals for the 2005/06 school year and echoes much of the data collected and presented in the district's Accountability Contract and District Review documents. Although emphases still remain on student achievement and performance -- graduation rates, provincial examination results, literacy rates (reading and writing both provincial and district assessments / examinations) -- the report also considers social responsibility (e.g., students leadership conferences, community volunteer work, substance prevention workshops, and ministry satisfaction surveys) and participation (e.g., fine and performing arts, athletics, and student council) as part of a student's "well-rounded" education (Surrey School District, 2006e). In its research findings, the report through a survey of classroom teachers, parents and students found that 35% of teachers "are not well informed about Aboriginal culture or history" (p. 37).[51] Also, 91% of the Aboriginal parents surveyed want teachers to "help their students in the classroom but only 65% felt that students would be helped by encouragement to share their culture" (p. 37) and only 42% of these parents feel that their culture is not respected at school. The section on Aboriginal education concludes with considerations for the future:

> 1) More collaboration between the Aboriginal Education Department and the Students Services Department to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students who have identified behaviour difficulties.
> 2) Completion of the Enhancement Agreement.
> 3) Aboriginal Education professional development activities for educators. (p. 37)

Aboriginal Education Department

Overseeing Surrey School District's Aboriginal Education Department is the District Principal, who, in collaboration with the district, has restructured the educational services for Aboriginal students and implemented a number of programs in order to improve their success and graduation rates. In addition to recording, analyzing, and interpreting results from provincial and district assessments / examinations, the district (through the Aboriginal Education Department) also examines grade-to-grade transitions (i.e., the percentage of students who enter a grade for the first time from any lower grade) of its students. The collected data indicate that little difference exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in transitioning from a lower grade to a higher one at the elementary level; however, far fewer Aboriginal students at the secondary level transition to a higher grade compared to non-Aboriginal students. For example, in the 2004/05 school year, 97% of non-Aboriginal students transitioned from Grades 8 to 9, compared to 88% of Aboriginal students.[52] This percentage gap between the two groups increases from Grades 10 to 11 and is even greater from Grades 11 to 12 : 90% for non-Aboriginal students and 73.4% for Aboriginal students for the former; 88% for non-Aboriginal students and 66% for Aboriginal students for the latter (Surrey School District, 2006d, p. 20).

District Initiatives and Programs

In addressing these issues and concerns, the district offers a diverse range of educational initiatives for Aboriginal students. First, itinerant Aboriginal Enhancement Teachers provide academic support to elementary schools that have high Aboriginal student populations. Second, Aboriginal Cultural Facilitators are available for presentations at all schools in the district, working in classrooms with all students and discussing Aboriginal cultures and doing hands-on activities. Third, Child and Youth Care Workers support Aboriginal students mainly in secondary schools and learning centres as academic and cultural liaisons. Fourth, Educational Assistants provide academic support in the classrooms mainly at the secondary level and offer after school support programs. Fifth, Helping Teachers provide curriculum assistance to teachers, focusing on the integration of Aboriginal

---

[51] The report, however, does not mention how many people were actually surveyed.

[52] Data for the 2005/06 results were not available in this publication.

content across the curriculum. Sixth, Aboriginal Support Teachers assist secondary Aboriginal students mainly for academic improvement. Seventh, Aboriginal Literacy Teachers and Aboriginal English Language Development Teachers support literacy and numeracy development for students at the elementary level.

In addition to this staff, the district has implemented a number of programs to help Aboriginal students transition from one grade to the next. First, at the elementary level, the Eagle Feather Program focuses on academic skill-building through a "culturally enriched curriculum to prepare students to achieve success in regular secondary school classes to graduation" and is aimed at Aboriginal students in Grades 4 to 7 (Surrey School District, 2006a, p. 1). Second, at the junior high school level, the *Smuqwa* Program and the *Stqeye* Program focus on Grades 8 and 9 who need extra academic support to better prepare them for the secondary school experience where an emphasis is placed on integrating Aboriginal content into the curricula and programs. Third, the "Learn and Earn Program" is a partnership between the *Lka-how-eya* Aboriginal Centre and the Surrey School District targeting fifteen to seventeen year-old Aboriginal students who are finding mainstream education a challenge. Designed to support and build students' literacy and numeracy skills, the program emphasizes working toward the Grade 10 academics (i.e., English, Math, and Science provincial examinations) and is not considered an intensive behaviour support program. Incorporating life skills and workplace components, the goal of this particular program is to integrate the students back into their own schools. Fourth, at the senior high school level, the *Kwasun* Program is intended for Aboriginal students in Grades 10 to 12 as a transitions program, similar to the Learn and Earn Program. It also focuses on literacy and numeracy skills with an extensive workplace experience component.

According to Surrey's "Twelfth Annual Report", Aboriginal students in the district "have demonstrated success by winning awards and scholarships and acting as leaders and role models for other students. While many Aboriginal students are achieving well, others are not. The goal is for Aboriginal students to achieve at the same level as their non-Aboriginal peers" (Surrey School District, 2006e, p. 35).

Concluding Remarks

In an era of accountability, both the Ministry of Education and Surrey School District have been proactive in initiating policies and programs to improve the education of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. At the ministry level, with respect to Aboriginal education, Accountability Contracts, District Reviews, and Enhancement Agreements all on paper appear to move in the same direction of addressing Aboriginal peoples' needs and concerns. In a recently agreed upon document between the provincial government and Aboriginal representatives, "The New Relationship", both parties believe in a "shared vision" which includes "respect for our respective laws and responsibilities" and a commitment to a "reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions" (BC Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 1). Furthermore, it includes a celebration of diversity and an appreciation of commonalities whereby Aboriginal peoples are striving toward the following goals:

> 1. To restore, revitalize and strengthen First Nations and their communities and families to eliminate the gap in standards of living with other British Columbians, and substantially improve the circumstances of First Nations people in areas which include: education, children and families, and health, including restoration of habitats to achieve access to traditional foods and medicines.
>
> 2. To achieve First Nations self-determination through the exercise of their aboriginal title including realizing the economic component of Aboriginal title, and exercising their jurisdiction over the use of land and resources through their own structures.
>
> 3. To ensure that lands and resources are managed in accordance with First Nations laws, knowledge and values and that resource development is carried out in a sustainable manner including the primary responsibility of preserving healthy lands, resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.
>
> 4. To revitalize and preserve First Nations cultures and languages and restore literacy and fluency in First Nation languages to ensure that no First Nation language becomes extinct. (pp. 1-2)

This document by far appears to be one of the boldest steps to which the provincial government has come in terms with acknowledging Aboriginal rights, self-determination, epistemology, and decolonization. However, the key remains in the practical implementation

of these policy initiatives -- how they will come about, what will they look like, and when will they occur.

Similarly, at the district level, Surrey has signed an Accountability Contract, been assessed in its District Review, and drafted an Enhancement Contract for provincial approval. It has also implemented a number of programs whose aim is to improve graduation rates, retention rates, and academic performance among its Aboriginal students. With these district programs and staffing in place, Surrey has taken Aboriginal education very seriously, examining and considering recent literature and research. At the centre of all these programs is the student, whose needs appear to be addressed; however, program delivery, effectiveness, and in turn, success, are still to be determined -- a continuing and evolving journey in Aboriginal education for BC's largest school district.

CHAPTER 7
INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents a within-case analysis for each of the eight interviewees who work within the secondary school setting in Surrey: the District Principal of Aboriginal Education, an Aboriginal Helping Teacher, an Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Worker, an Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator, two Aboriginal Support Teachers, and two BC First Nations 12 Teachers. Although only eight educators responded to the initial letter of contact for this study in Surrey, they provide a broadened perspective with the different roles and responsibilities within the school district regarding Aboriginal education.

After consulting with the District Aboriginal Principal and an Aboriginal Helping Teacher, I was given names of other educators in the Aboriginal Department to contact, including the only two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers in Surrey at that time. After sending the initial letters of contact to those individuals, six volunteered for the study and were confirmed through electronic mail. The sites and times of the interviews were set at the participants' convenience during the 2005/2006 school year.

From the questions posed and answers given during the interviews, four categories are used to organize their responses: background profile and role within the district (personally and professionally); main issues of intended goals, challenges, curricula and resources, Aboriginal identity, and "success"; impact of programs (present and future); and reflections and concluding thoughts on Aboriginal education and programs (personally and professionally).

As public educators, the interviewees were not concerned about confidentiality or their anonymity within the district and permitted me to use their first names in the study. They all felt comfortable being audio recorded and were eagerly willing to share their thoughts and reflections of Aboriginal education and of the district's policies and programs. They did not feel the need to read over their own transcripts or even this chapter despite my

offering. The only participant who requested a copy of the completed thesis was the District Principal of Aboriginal Education.[53] .

District Principal of Aboriginal Education - Gayle

Background and Role

Born and raised on a reserve in British Columbia, Gayle attended Indian Day School and views her education and reserve life with mixed feelings:

> I was born and raised on a reserve and know of the struggles that Aboriginal students go through, no different than what I experienced when I went to high school. . . . The experiences were negative, and probably . . . why I am successful today is based on work ethic. . . . Obviously, my parents were very supportive. My dad was always encouraging us to get an education because reserve life didn't resonate well. They kept saying that if we stayed, we wouldn't have anything. You would need to go beyond the community. (Interview, March 21, 2006, p. 1)

What seemed to have "saved" her from the struggles and hardships of reserve life was a teacher who was also her basketball coach. According to Gayle, playing basketball and having this particular teacher and coach inspired and encouraged her in furthering her educational and occupational prospects:

> And then a teacher [came] in and [took] a group of us and really [took] us under his wing. He saw gifts in us that we didn't see. He was in basketball. He played for Team Canada -- he was an amazing player, so he taught us his skills. I was a natural in the game. I ended up playing basketball. He kept encouraging us all the time. He took us to UBC and traveled with us to tournaments to play. He showed us more than what an isolated community had to offer. It was a very good experience. (p. 1)

As District Principal for Aboriginal Education in Surrey for the last three years, Gayle has reorganized the department such that the responsibility for student achievement and student "success" is not solely on the department's shoulders or on the support workers within the schools and classrooms. According to Gayle, the concerns of students belong to all who are involved in the education system -- parents or caregivers, classroom teachers, school administrators, district support workers, and district administrators:

---

[53] Perhaps because the participants saw me as a colleague as opposed to an outsider doing research about Aboriginal programs that they felt comfortable in trusting my professional judgment as to what was said in the

When I first came in, it was the Aboriginal Education Department and Surrey School District, and we were over here and the school district was over there. I never felt so isolated in my life coming into this district. But I had to change that so that we restructured our support services so that we're not the answer to the education of these students. It comes from the classroom . . . it's a partnership in that we all have to work together. . . . It's a district initiative. (pp. 1-2)

Issues and Challenges

In terms of goals, Gayle shares the ones of the district: increased academic achievement, increased graduation rates, and increased parental engagement. However, in the process of reaching these goals, she sees a number of barriers that need to be addressed openly and overcome positively.

One of the greatest challenges Gayle encounters is the hesitation, reluctance, and, for some, resistance to Aboriginal programs among teachers:

> One of the biggest challenges is professional development for teachers so that they can feel comfortable enough to teach about First Nations in the curriculum on a daily, not just in a multicultural-type week. . . . For those who are learning, it has been a really positive experience because we're winning them over one at a time. . . . If we can get the educators to be more involved. (p. 2)

Thus, despite the growing amount of Aboriginal resources, teachers still feel unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable with teaching about Aboriginal peoples and their histories.

As professional educators, Gayle believes that teachers generally do feel a sense of failure when students, regardless of ethnicity, do not succeed, but may be unwilling to re-examine their teaching practices to change the situation:

> I think that as teachers we get too defensive when we see and believe they are being blamed. Instead of saying, "Okay, this is what I have. What can I do to change it?" and instead of being defensive and saying, "They're criticizing me as an educator" . . . we need to work collectively together, from the CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] union, from the STA [Surrey Teachers' Association], from senior management. (p. 6)

Gayle strongly feels that the Aboriginal support programs and workers should not and do not replace classroom teachers: "I always believe that the teachers should not abdicate their

---

interviews and therefore did not feel the need to ask to see the transcripts or the written analysis of this chapter.

classroom responsibilities to the Aboriginal support person, and that has happened far too often" (p. 4). Therefore, teachers "have to take greater responsibility for [Aboriginal] student learning, and it has been a tough one" (p. 7).

Related to the challenge of "winning over" teachers are the teacher-education training programs at the universities which Gayle criticizes:

> We're so disconnected. . . . I've always said that about UBC and SFU. . . . I mean how are you better prepared to teach in the real world? And I think that [Aboriginal education] should be a mandatory course that should be taken for educators so that they are culturally sensitive -- the awareness is there, and they hear from the class whatever the best practices are. (p. 4)

Thus, universities should re-examine and re-evaluate the mandatory and elective courses of student-teachers. Although the program is already intensely demanding, the value of Aboriginal education, knowledge, and epistemology cannot and should not be overlooked.

One main challenge of the district is to improve students' level of academics, but, perhaps more importantly at this time, Gayle believes that the focus should be on assessing students' individual and personal needs in order to retain them within the education system:

> If we take a look at the data that comes from the ministry for Aboriginal education, our students are not achieving as well as other students. . . . So we need to take a look at that and look at how we can improve the academics of these students. . . . I strongly believe that if we continue integrating a lot more Aboriginal content into the daily activities of students, the self-esteem will come with who they are versus the negativity and the systemic racism of being Aboriginal. (p. 2)
>
> If I were to look at an Aboriginal student in a high school and I pulled [his or her] file, I can add up the days [he or she] missed . . . probably missed about one to two years of education, based on their attendance alone. . . . So attendance has been a huge issue with the Aboriginal students. (pp. 7-8)

Thus, the Aboriginal Education Department is looking at ways to keep students in school, which for some has become more of a priority than high academic achievement. Attending school in this sense becomes a measure of "success".

In terms of curricula and resources, greater Aboriginal content is one step in addressing such challenges. However, the delivery of the content is just as important as, if not more than, the content itself, as Gayle provides an anecdote regarding her son's Social Studies 11 class. According to her son, the teacher assigned a reading from the

recommended textbook, *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues*, entitled, "Poverty on Aboriginal Reserves", without providing any introduction or background information. In the class discussion the day after, the teacher raised the issue of why there is high unemployment on reserves. Gayle retells the incident:

> What's the first answer going to be? 'Because they're lazy people'. Unfortunately, there was another First Nations girl in that room and she left and cried. She comes from the reserve as does my son too, but that's systemic racism that continues today. So, how do we work with the departments in the high schools so that they'll be sensitive to the curriculum? How do you deliver that, to bring justice to the First Nations people, to not leave it open like that where kids assume? We need to lay the foundation first -- introduce [the topic] properly, give the history, and then analyze it before opening it up like that, but unfortunately that happens far too often. (pp. 3-4)

To emphasize this point, Gayle elaborates on the use of textbooks in the classroom: "It starts with who did the textbooks down to how to deliver it" and teachers need to be "sensitive to the students" when teaching potentially controversial topics (p. 9). She recalls another anecdote regarding a conversation she overheard at the UBC bookstore with a newly hired teacher who was given the course BC First Nations Studies 12 to teach for the first time:

> I heard this guy over at the bookstore and he was very excited to get his very first teaching job, and he was explaining to his friend, "But oh, they gave me First Nations 12 because nobody will take it and I was the last one coming in, so they gave it to me and I have to teach it". (p. 6)

Even with a course that focuses on Aboriginal peoples and history that is now provincially examinable, its curriculum and prescribed learning outcomes may not be justifiably taught due to its unfortunate "non-academic" reputation by both students and teachers.

Another barrier is the issue around Aboriginal identity among students where they feel they are singled out negatively, not only in the classroom but also in the textbooks:

> When I take a look at education, the textbooks portrayed [Aboriginal peoples] as savages, as heathens. . . . and of course you're brown-skinned and sitting there and everybody is looking at you. That's the last thing you want. When my son brought home that book and they're still doing it today, no wonder we're struggling with self-identification. That systemic racism is still there. We don't self-identify [as Aboriginal] until probably we're adequate and awake and no longer highlighted in a negative way. Take a look at the data. You take a look at the Fraser Institute, again, highlighting how dismal we are as educators of Aboriginal kids. My kids are going to struggle with that. . . .

> You have to swing it around so that we're looking at the positives of the data versus what's not working. (pp. 8-9)

In terms of "success", Gayle expands the criteria beyond Ministry expectations and its standards of "meeting" and "exceeding expectations" in literacy and numeracy. For her, it is more than achieving high academics results, although the district has made it one of its priorities. "Success", according to Gayle, is when "we can keep the students in the system. . . . Success will be keeping the students and giving them opportunities to set up goals for a career, whatever they decide, and to accomplish what they have to do. That would be success -- keeping them in the system, because we're losing far too many Aboriginal students" (p. 3).

Impact and Recommendations

From Gayle's perspective as the District Principal of Aboriginal Education, Surrey's programs for Aboriginal students have been a "huge, huge challenge" yet Gayle appears hopeful: "From the senior management down, they're really taking a look at the information and knowing that we need to do a better job with this population of students. We've got a long way to go, but when the support structure happens from the top down, it's just a matter of time" (p. 6).

As recommendations, Gayle would like to see more elders involved in the school system, "to give a sense of belonging, a sense of community. . . . How do we teach them traditional knowledge, respect, and skills that we were raised on so that they can make better choices in life?" (p. 7). From her perspective, the ideal situation is when the Aboriginal community and school district work together without blaming each other:

> If we were to experience success, we can't expect the school system to do it because of the history. . . . Knowing this, how do we work together so that collectively we can move on? The parenting skills aren't in place and we shouldn't judge that. The school shouldn't blame the parents and the parents shouldn't blame the school -- we need to work together. That's the ideal -- when they can see us working together, students see their parents actively engaged in their education, that's powerful. . . . Once we have the parents more engaged, then we can move onto developing courses and more resources. . . . We blame far too often. It's time to change that, and that's the hardest thing, to get beyond that. (pp. 9-10)

Gayle also believes that with greater incorporation of Aboriginal content from kindergarten through to Grade 12, students will have a "good understanding" so that they can "compare and contrast and analyze and think and understand how history was so unjust to us as First Nations people" (p. 5), and "instead of focusing on what isn't working, we need to focus on what we think will work and celebrate achievements instead of the opposite. That's a tough paradigm shift" (p. 9). As an example, for graduation, the Aboriginal Education Department holds a celebratory ceremony inviting family and friends to honour Aboriginal students with achievement awards. Thus, success is measured one student at a time.

Ideally, however, Gayle (with a slight hesitation) would commit to an Aboriginal school but would not be advertised as such in order to raise the awareness of Aboriginal peoples and perspective: "It would have a Coast Salish name. It would be opened to all students and we would have the best technology, the best teachers, the best of everything to deal with the whole child and the gifts they bring to school as opposed to the negativity we tend to highlight too often" (p. 7).

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

Gayle insightfully points out that "we all have issues, which have been handed down through residential schooling and everything else, [but] if we could look beyond that for the gifts that each child carries with him [or her] and tap into those gifts and nurture them, I think anything is possible" (p. 2). A sense of belonging is essential as Gayle briefly recalls her own story that also challenged me as a teacher and role model to students:

> I slept in and I couldn't get to school on time. It's the worst feeling in the world to have to walk that road to school, knowing that everybody else was there already, and knowing that I would get into trouble by the teacher, that the teachers were going to come down hard on me. . . Instead of embracing the student and saying, "It's great to see you. Are you okay? You slept in, that's all right", teachers often say, "You've slept in again. You're creating more work for me and now I have to catch you up." How do we switch that so that we can embrace the kids so they feel comfortable coming in versus that awful feeling that you slept in, that you've disappointed the teacher again?
>
> I think when we start looking at it differently, that sense of belonging will happen, and regardless of the issues we have because my issues were no different -- I was born and raised on a reserve, all those hidden stuff of residential school abuse, the physical, emotional, sexual -- my family was treated no differently. But I succeeded, so I know that everyone of these kids

> can succeed. It's just that we need to give more tools to do that. As educators, we are the key to that. (p. 8)

Gayle concludes by stating that "the best educator that any student can have is when he or she is not placing blame on this or that, but it's what he or she can do differently versus doing the same thing all the time. It's that I need to connect, so how can I do it differently? If we had all educators like that, then we'd do a real service for the students" (p. 10).

Aboriginal Helping Teacher - Angus

Background and Role

With an Aboriginal ancestry, Angus has been involved in Surrey's Aboriginal Advisory Committee since 1994 and has worked in the Surrey School District as an Aboriginal Helping Teacher since 1999. At the time of this interview, Angus has a broad based position with various responsibilities at the district level: he works from the Curriculum and Instruction Centre to provide support for Aboriginal students through the various programs at both district and school levels; he writes Aboriginal curriculum as support materials for teachers; he is also involved in the district's English Language Development program in the schools to provide literacy skills for Aboriginal students; he works closely in collaboration with the district's Learning Support Team which also provides assistance in various forms to students with learning challenges.

Issues and Challenges

One of the goals of the Aboriginal Helping Teacher is to help incorporate Aboriginal content into the curriculum through supplementary resources, and therefore Angus' role is not only to assist Aboriginal students but also teachers in general. To achieve this goal, however, Angus believes that a number of barriers need to be addressed.

One of the main challenges Angus sees is the diversity among Aboriginal students within the Surrey School district:

> When we start talking about Aboriginal students, we're not just talking about one kind of student. We're talking about a great range of learning abilities, a great range of cultural backgrounds. . . . That's one of the challenges right away. If we're talking about an Aboriginal student in Surrey, that student can take various forms in terms of whom they are and what their individual learning needs are. (Interview, May 10, 2006, p. 1)

The difficulty, and hence danger, is not to overgeneralize Aboriginal students and assume their needs would be similar or would be met in a similar way. Individualizing students and assessing individual needs becomes a time-consuming yet necessary process that the district cannot afford to ignore, an example of a "best practice" in the classroom.

Another challenge that needs to be overcome is the devastating effects of the history that Aboriginal peoples experienced:

> And you hear Aboriginal people speaking about [the historical] issues and how it effects them in terms of their success. . . . Aboriginal people often talk about breaking the circle, the cycle that goes on -- you have people whose pride was taken away, their culture taken away, and their place in school settings which are foreign to them, they're given different definitions of "success". . . . So they went through an apocalyptic experience and for any group of people to overcome that in a rapid way are unlikely. . . . You have offshoots from the historical -- you have alcoholism and problems with addiction and teenage pregnancy, not that these are strangers to any community, but they have visited the Aboriginal community in a higher percentage. (p. 4)

Angus sees the legacy of residential schooling and the long-term negative effects it has on the Aboriginal communities and, until they are addressed, he believes that the cycle will continue and unfortunately will affect the next generation.

In terms of "success", Angus believes that "there are many types of successes for students" (p. 3). Although he recognizes and acknowledges the ministry's definition and criteria for measuring success, he perceptively questions it:

> [It] depends on what you're trying to measure. I think that when we look at student success in Surrey, what we're trying to do is to make sure there is some comfort in coming to school. We want the kids to have some cultural connection, so if we can have that happen, that could be a measure of success.
>
> There are some people who obviously drop out of school and feel they are successful because they can get a job somewhere. . . . But I think as far as the system is concerned, we know what success is because we have to follow what the Ministry of Education has prescribed for learning outcomes for particular grades and also what the requirements are for students to graduate and I think we put a fair degree of weight on academic success. (pp. 3-4)

Thus, a clash of philosophies may result when institutionalized schools are "not in harmony with what [Aboriginal people] define as being success. . . . they might not see what we're doing here is contributing to their success" (p. 4). To reconcile this conflict, Angus believes that schools need to be "more relevant for all students, for all learners" (p. 4).

Angus also cites the lack of Aboriginal content in the Social Studies strand as a challenge in addressing the needs of Aboriginal education not only at the district level but also at the provincial level. Although Angus believes that most Social Studies teachers are doing the best they can in terms of educating their students, he believes, yet challenges, that because they feel the constraints of time, the overwhelming nature of the prescribed learning outcomes, and the pressures of academic performance on provincial examinations, they cannot afford to invest more toward introducing and exploring Aboriginal issues to their students:

> Social Studies teachers were commenting that they were so busy teaching to the test that they don't really have an opportunity to infuse a lot of Aboriginal content. . . . But there are always opportunities to infuse Aboriginal content. It really doesn't matter what you're doing. Even if there isn't a PLO [prescribed learning outcome] that specifically addresses that, you can still address Aboriginal content very easily. (p. 7)
>
> [However], one of the big things is the desire of the teachers. . . . I find that secondary teachers are mostly teaching to the test. (p. 8)

Aboriginal pride and identity also play an influential role in students' lives at school but they appear situational. According to Angus, the majority of students are proud of their Aboriginal heritage where they "want to share their culture"; however, if their environment "seems to be negative, they're going to clam up" (p. 2). The difficulty about labeling students in the schools is its ambiguous message: "Does it mean that we're singling out those children, that we're going to be pulling them out of class? Are we going to be treating them vastly differently than with the other children we're working with?" (p. 2)

From the district survey on Aboriginal education taken during the 2004/05 school year, Angus concludes that Aboriginal students are "proud of their heritage but they don't really want that heritage to be made into something that would make them look different from the other kids in a negative way" (p. 2). Thus, conformity among peers appears to affect (at least temporarily) students' acceptance or rejection of Aboriginal identity.

Impact and Recommendations

Angus feels "cautiously optimistic of what we see happening throughout the province and, in particular, in Surrey . . . that the numbers are improving as far as academic success goes for Aboriginal students" (p. 3). However, from his personal and professional points of view, whether the programs implemented are effective or not is "probably irrelevant" as the "most important thing is what data [the province, district, and schools] are collecting on those students after the programs are in place" (p. 3). More significantly, according to Angus, is the interpretation of the collected data:

> We're hoping that we're right in that. . . . I hope they're working, and I think that the data that we're using seems to reflect that we are having some success with students . . . but whatever my feelings are, the effectiveness has to be reflected in measurable data that we're doing with the students and the feedback that we get from students and parents. (p. 3)

One of the main strengths of the Surrey School District is its size which allows for a wide range of programs. Angus views Surrey as "a leader, if not the leader, in Aboriginal education" where the department has "focused very strongly on making sure that the whole education system is involved in Aboriginal education, not just the Aboriginal department", that it provides "above and beyond the support" for its students (p. 8). Another strength that Angus observes is the district's focus on academic achievement where emphasis is placed on the fact that "kids need to go through school, to stay in school" and for them to "come out here [i.e., the schools] with something they can use at the end that will be beneficial to them", and if the education system fails to do that, then "we have failed the kids" (p. 8).

As recommendations, Angus believes that Aboriginal education is more than the responsibility of the teachers, schools, district department, or community: communication with and involvement by parents are important in the educational process of students. Thus, Aboriginal students must be part of this educational system -- to be integrated not separated.

As well, role models, both teachers and students, are essential in the process:

> If we consider Aboriginal education to be going beyond just Aboriginal people and just the Aboriginal programs, then I'm talking about everybody being role models for students. . . . [As teachers], you have someone saying something positive about Aboriginal education. That's an important role

> model. . . . all teachers need to be role models. [As students], they can help mentor other Aboriginal students, to encourage them to continue school. (p. 7)

According to Angus, one does not have to be an Aboriginal person to be a role model for Aboriginal students: "The role modeling that needs to happen are from those who aren't Aboriginal" as they indirectly yet influentially send a positive message that "it's good to be Aboriginal and it's acceptable to be Aboriginal" (p. 7).

In terms of the curriculum, whether Aboriginal content is integrated into the course or separated into units, "it needs to be genuine" where the teacher has to "say that this is something important to be taught and it really ties in with the learning outcomes of this course, and it's going to be fun -- that [students] will enjoy doing it and it has a purpose" (p. 9). From Angus' perspective, the worse case would be when a teacher is "forced into something without understanding it", thus making him or her less effective in the classroom (p. 9).

Ideally, Angus recommends a complete overhaul and restructuring of the provincial educational system and feels he has to "part company with [his] role in the school district" (p. 5):

> I think that all students are fundamentally the same, historical issues aside. . . . Students need to come to a school where they have role models and those role models must be able to inspire them to do the work, because learning is an active thing. We can only teach to a certain point but the students are the ones who are actively learning. . . .
>
> I think in the elementary school, we can do away with the concept of having one teacher teaching all subjects . . . because [it's] like a holding pattern that happens in North American schools in those years, and I think it effects all students, not just Aboriginal students. . . . We tend to isolate the children into grades and we're still working with a very old model that worked before, but I'm not sure if it's still working.
>
> And then I think of high school. There should be much greater liaison between post-secondary education and the secondary education. . . . [but] a very small percentage of students go onto post-secondary . . . [yet] everything we deal with skews toward the academic university experience. So we really haven't addressed the need for vocational and technical training from high schools. . . . Do we need to keep kids in an academic stream all the way through Grade 12? That's 13 years of education. When we look at other countries, we see very different approaches, and we see a higher degree of

> success. . . . I would start by reorganizing the system itself, because I think inspiration drives education for kids. (pp. 5, 6)

Angus believes there is an over-emphasis on academic courses where the "system" focuses its success on student performance in the academic stream. As a result, "non-academic" courses and fields become neglected which means they become undervalued and unfortunately undermined.

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

For Angus, one of the most important characteristics in Aboriginal education is the inspiration teachers with a positive attitude potentially have on their students. Teaching Aboriginal content is "not a difficult thing to do if the people have the will to do it and the desire to do it" (p. 9). He also criticizes Aboriginal content and education for focusing predominantly on the past, especially on its negative events and impact:

> I think for too long we've just looked at the past. . . . Aboriginal content always seems to be about what happened a long time ago. . . . There are times when you want to look at the historical aspect of what happened to Aboriginal people and there is an educational purpose and an historical and cultural purpose for looking at that if we're going to understand colonization. . . .
>
> But if Aboriginal topics only focused on all the negative things then we miss all the wonderful things that have happened and are happening in the Aboriginal communities. And we miss the present and the future. . . . you need to focus on both, but if you don't include the successes, then it becomes this really bad message. I think it will take time for the Aboriginal community to fully go in that direction. . . .
>
> As far as inspiring students to learn and do well in school, we need to focus on the present. . . . I think if we focus more on [the positive accomplishments] and less on the problems, we may have more success. (p. 10)

Thus, moving forward from the past to the present and looking into the future are important lessons to be learned and taught regarding First Nations content according to Angus. Educators need to inspire students (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to learn -- a key to successful teaching.

Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Worker - Bonita

Background and Role

Bonita is an Aboriginal woman who has worked with Aboriginal students many years through volunteering at various schools and has been with the Surrey School District for four years. Her job description / title is Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Worker at two secondary schools in which she is responsible for the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal students. While one secondary school she works in is located in Central Surrey with a student population of over 1,500, the other one is located in North Surrey with a student population of over 1,200 and is considered to be inner-city.[54] With a total caseload of approximately one hundred students between the two schools, Bonita has a number of duties and responsibilities.

On a typical day, she would check the attendance reports to see which students are absent and phone home to see if they are all right. She tries to see all her students on a weekly basis by visiting them in their classes, which, according to her, is a challenge in itself. In addition to contacting parents, Bonita acts as a counselor (although not formally trained in that role) for Aboriginal students where they "usually sit down and talk about the problems that they're encountering and it's usually social problems" (Interview, June 28, 2006, p. 1).[55] Working along side of teachers, she also regularly contacts the teachers of the Aboriginal students for progress reports and attendance updates: "So basically, I just do the follow up and ask why they're not coming to class or what the problem is and try to work that out" (p. 4).

Issues and Challenges

As one main issue, Bonita comments on the students' general attitude toward their Aboriginal identity: "A lot of students are still trying to find their identity, so when they're being called you know, a Native, which they surely don't identify as one, they become timid and begin to withdraw from school and society as a whole" (p. 1). Bonita sees that students do not relate to being "Aboriginal" and are more affected with the term, "Native Indian", as a

[54] Bonita spends most of her time (4 days) at the inner-city school and only 1 day at the other secondary school as the needs of the former are more apparent than those of the latter.

racial slur, but she is more comfortable with the term, "First Nations" or "Aboriginal". However, more important than the identification is the feeling of "sameness", that Aboriginal students do not want "special treatment" or to be "singled-out" in or out of class (p. 2). Perhaps they feel embarrassed if they are perceived by their peers to have privileges and/or different treatment. Perhaps conforming to the mainstream is important for adolescents in order for them to feel accepted by their peers. By conforming to mainstream society, Aboriginal students can shed (at least temporarily) their "Aboriginalness", which according to Bonita is "a shame" (p. 2). Instead, Bonita believes that students need to embrace it or at least acknowledge that they are "Aboriginal" and not to be ashamed of their heritage. At the same time, however, Bonita can understand that during adolescence, teenagers would want to belong, and if being labeled as "Aboriginal" makes them stand out, they would be hesitant or even resistant to being identified as an Aboriginal student.

In terms of "success", Bonita sees several layers for students: academic achievement, graduation, and self-identity:

> We have role models where [students] are academically sound. Some of them received an award of excellence, being "A" students. That's one level of success. Success is also when I see a student coming from the elementary age and succeed in graduating from Grade 12. I know it was a long road for them. I think that's success right there. . . .
>
> Graduation is certainly a success alone, but for them to know their identity and self-identify as an Aboriginal . . . to overcome their barriers and to be able to see their past history and to keep on the road where they will be successful and not to take the wrong path, and for them to raise their children to be successful, so that we can leave a legacy of positiveness rather than the negativeness that we hear stereotypically as a First Nations people. (pp. 2, 4).

Thus, for some students, "success" is measured by their own academic achievement, while for others, "success" is graduating from high school, and still for others "success" is accepting and celebrating their own Aboriginal identity.

With these issues, Bonita comments on three important challenges. First, "the biggest challenge here is actually to try to keep [the Aboriginal students] in school, especially the

---

[55] Although Bonita counsels Aboriginal students, she is not formally trained as a counselor but feels it is an extremely important and integral role as a youth care worker.

Grade 8s. They have a huge transition problem from Grade 7. . . . and it's usually tardiness, absence, and behaviour" (p. 1). Second, related to this challenge is the

> emotional baggage where the mothers have a hard time with parenting because they didn't get those skills from their own parents because of residential schools. There's lots of need for counseling for them . . .
>
> You know they have problems of their own right now and for them to parent a teen is really tough and so therefore it continues to get lost in the waves. I'm only a small part of that. I can give them direction from the school system, but when it's not transferable at home, it just doesn't work. (p. 2)

Third, and perhaps most unfortunate, not all teachers have the "real sense of Aboriginalness of students. They've gotten this old school stuff where Natives are more stereotypical and being labeled as not much educated, alcoholics, so forth. It's not a good picture. The kids do come to me and they have asked in regards to their teachers. So we're trying to teach the educators too. It's the best place to start" (p. 2)

At the inner-city school where Bonita mostly works, however, she does find that there are teachers who are involved and are "wonderful" who try to understand their students (p. 5). However, in a personal anecdote, Bonita emotionally recalls a situation that happened to her son at his elementary school where other students bullied him because of his long hair:

> He just ran away from school one day and that freaked me out. I asked who the Aboriginal] Support Worker was and tried to get in contact with her but she was there so infrequently so I had to go in and talk with them[56]. . . .
>
> My son was in the counseling department with the teachers and he brought them to tears, just to say why his hair was so long, why he likes it, and why this is his culture. It was a very emotional two-days for me. . . . I wanted to go and do some workshops with the children and so I brought down some resources and even different storybooks to read, but my son said that they never did anything with them. The teachers never read any of stories to the class. So that's what we deal with. It's just ignorance, I think. (p. 5)

Thus, teachers can be an advocate for Aboriginal education and Aboriginal students or they can inadvertently become an obstacle.

---

[56] As with most Aboriginal Support Workers in the district, more than one school is assigned to them and therefore timing and scheduling become factors whereby they may not necessarily be present at the school when a crisis occurs and would have to rearrange their timetable in order to meet an immediate need or emergency situation.

Impact and Recommendations

With the recent restructuring of the district's Aboriginal department and a shift toward academic achievement, Bonita does see it "getting better and better" (p. 4). However, she feels that the cultural and social elements of the programs are overlooked:

> I think we are progressing in a way academically . . . but there's still a need for the support in place for social skills. Behaviour is a big issue at times, dealing with the social and emotional parts of the students. . . .
>
> I feel strongly that they need the cultural support, not just for them going to schools and doing presentations on residential schools or a project on making dreamcatchers . . . We still need those cultural workers to come in and just talk to students. The kids relate to them, and when the program changed, some of the workers did too. Some parents didn't like the change, and many students didn't like it either. (p. 3)

In order to address these issues and challenges, Bonita recommends greater consistency for Aboriginal workers, regardless of their title or responsibilities. In order to build a bond and trust with students, Aboriginal workers need to develop a relationship and comfortable rapport with them. In turn, this connection and sense of continuity bring security for students who may otherwise come from unstable backgrounds and feel disjointed whenever major changes occur to their programs or personnel. As well, Bonita believes that teamwork and integrative approaches among staff and administration are essential for programs to be effective -- negotiating time with counselors and teachers and negotiating the number of allocated teaching and support blocks with administrators. Bonita also believes that more support is needed in this inner-city school as its Aboriginal population continues to increase every year. Most important, however, educators need to be positive and sensitive to the needs of their students as focusing on the negative emotionally drains the students:

> A lot of [Aboriginal] people want to try to better themselves and so when I have a student who comes to me and says that, "we all live on reserves and teepees and are uneducated and are alcoholics", I find that completely ignorant and such comments break the students. . . . [Teachers] should think on a positive note, because I always find it's a negative one. We should be positive and say how we evolved and progressed as a people. (p. 2)

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

"There's lots of work to be done yet, lots of work. We're slowly getting there" (p. 6). Ideally, Bonita would like to see the Aboriginal department expand in the next five years and be accepted and respected as colleagues. For her, teamwork is a key element to success – having a supportive and caring administration, staff, and parents:

> I'm lucky. I hear some stories where the Support Workers aren't even acknowledged in the schools. They go in and do their job and go away and get snubbed all the time. These are things that we need to be educated about too. People need to know that we're educated. We're not just coming off the street and applying for a job. You need the qualifications and education to back that up.
>
> The key is being part of a team in a school and to be consistent with the students, meaning to stay and not have ten schools to go to. . . . a number of kids need that direction. . . . We find that not many Grade 8 students make it through the year because they had a tough time in the grades before, and they're lost by the time they get to Grade 8. It doesn't just take a week or two weeks to get them back. It takes a long time because it took a long time to get the way we were and stay on with education. It's very tough, but I'm hopeful. There's hope. (p. 6)

Her compassion in helping Aboriginal students in her schools is honestly and sincerely evident. Bonita views Surrey's policies and programs as positive progress and is hopeful for the future when one day she will see Aboriginal students being proud of their ancestry and heritage instead of feeling embarrassed or ashamed.

Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator - Debra

Background and Role

Debra is an Aboriginal woman who has been employed by the Surrey School District for the last eight years. Although her title has changed in the last four years (most currently being Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator), her main role is to identify Aboriginal students who need help in various capacities at the fourteen schools to which she is assigned in the district.[57] For the academics, Debra would designate specific times in her schedule to consult with the teacher and work one-on-one with students. However, most of her time is

---

[57] Surrey School District has six Aboriginal Cultural Facilitators who visit the ninety-nine elementary and eighteen secondary schools.

spent on cultural presentations, mainly shared with the whole classroom as opposed to only individual Aboriginal students.

As a Cultural Facilitator, Debra is also involved with the district's Aboriginal camps where Support Workers can bond and connect with the students at the beginning of the school year and reflect and evaluate at the end of the school year:

> It would give us a chance to work with the kids, to get them to trust us, because that is a big issue in September. So once we did that, we get to know which kids needed more support, which kids needed the academic or social skills or maybe self-esteem. We worked with connecting that child with the counselor because they're dealing with drugs or alcohol or were abused, things like that. It's also great at the end of the year because we get together and discuss what happened during the year and have a time to catch up with students and colleagues. (Interview, June 19, 2006, p. 4).

However, Debra's role is more than a Cultural Facilitator in the classroom as she would also check on students' attendance, do home visits, and social work:

> I would go and work with kids who didn't come to school. I would go to their house and have to get them out of bed. . . . There are lots of different issues. . . . It could be prostitution that some of these kids were doing. How do you say, "Here, do you math now" or "Do your English now" when they have so many issues to deal with? My belief is that you have to deal with the issues first before you can work with on any academics. (p. 4)

Issues and Challenges

Debra cites a number of issues and demands to her program. First, she finds that parents and teachers are her toughest challenges because "it's hard to get them into the schools and see what and how their child is doing. Then, of course, there's the teachers where they would say, 'No, you need to get this done and that's the way it is'" (p. 4). Even though Debra admits that "she doesn't know everything" and had to learn about West Coast First Nations Peoples and history to become a Cultural Facilitator, she "had an open mind" but found that "some schools just don't have that" (p. 3). However, Debra also states that some teachers were "compassionate" that they "understood that [students] need to take of [themselves], do what [they] can, and [they (i.e., both teacher and student)] would work through the academics" (p. 4). Again, Debra emphasizes the issue of trust that teachers need to build trust with their students and need to show consistency.

Second, Debra sees racism and bullying linked with identity, although perhaps they may not pertain to all students:

> Some students are very proud of who they are and some don't want to be identified [as Aboriginal]. I think it depends on that person and why. . . some just don't want to be labeled as Aboriginal and there are still people out there who are mean because of the history of where we came from. . . .
>
> In high schools, there's peer pressure and they want to find who they are, and then, if they are Aboriginal, that's another thing they have to identify with. . . . Being a student, there's so much on their plate already . . . knowing that they're dealing with other issues, like peer pressure, trying to fit in a bigger school. I think that comes first and then their Aboriginal identity comes next. They will find what they are, who they are, later on in their years, hopefully by the time they get to Grade 12. (p. 5)

Again, the issue of conformity and Aboriginal identity becomes a key issue for many Aboriginal students who feel they are struggling between the two worlds -- that of being "Aboriginal" and that of feeling accepted by peers.

Third, in terms of "success", Debra believes that it is more than academic achievement; instead, she strongly incorporates a cultural component: "Success is when students know who they are, where they come from, where they belong. It doesn't have to be a big success -- just coming to school, just being there can be considered as a success" (p. 2). Thus, Debra feels that individual growth is an important aspect of schooling and education:

> Seeing that child, that student grows from Grade 8 from being a shy and quiet, going onto Grade 12 and graduating. Not knowing what's going to happen after, but just knowing that that's an accomplishment -- that's success to see that in knowing that child, that is going to graduate in Grade 12 and watching that student change and grow, becoming more responsible. (p. 5)

For herself personally, she sees success in "just working and being part of and working with Aboriginal kids" and if she can help one, then she feels that she has succeeded (p. 2).

Impact and Recommendations

Because of the workload and vast number of schools Debra visits, she sees students too infrequently and feels at times that the opportunities of developing rapport and

interacting with students are lost.[58] Even though she is scheduled to visit each of her fourteen schools twice a month, the Aboriginal students are not guaranteed to receive her assistance, depending on their needs during that particular month:

> If I have, for instance, one student at one school, I see that one student for about an hour and a half, which is a good time for that student. But let's say I have eleven kids at another school, they're not going to get very much time, at most half an hour. . . . so it's hard sometimes. And maybe for some students, I only see them once every two months. (p. 3)

As a result, Debra feels that her position as Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator is not utilized as effectively as it could be: "I feel there's no connection right now, having fourteen schools, but we do the best we can" (p. 3).

As one recommendation, Debra believes that we need to continue to educate not only students but teachers as well: "We need to educate people in the school more about who we really are" (p. 2), and "the only way to get through and learn about our culture is to have an Aboriginal person come in and share that and get the information" (p. 6). Debra insightfully and passionately elaborates:

> To us, our stories don't come from a book; our songs don't come from a book. Our songs, our stories are passed on from our ancestors, passed on from our grandparents and they're still passed on. Same with the stories we share. From the residential schooling, there are a few books out there that share, but where are they coming from and who wrote them? The only person you can get information from is an actual Aboriginal person. They're the ones. We're the ones that know. You can get information from books, from the library, but my resources too are a lot to do with going to the person, going to my family, going to other people's families. . . .
>
> I always say when I go into the schools that the information I give is not just from books. I'm actually getting the information from my family -- the stories I share with you, the songs. (p. 6)

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

History has affected Debra's own childhood as school was not a priority. Her mother attended residential school who didn't receive much of an education. Debra realized that her

[58] Debra visits seven schools for the first two weeks of the month and then another seven schools during the last two weeks of the month.

mother's value of and attitude toward and, in effect, against school were passed on to Debra, yet she "succeeded" and offers hope to other students:

> We didn't sit down and read a book or sit down and do our homework. We spent most of our time playing or doing chores. That was the thing -- because of the history that goes way back. That is what I feel. That is what I believe. We can only change it within ourselves, change it within our families. But, it has affected how many years -- hundreds of years ago, and it's going to take us a long time. . .
>
> If you have students that have many issues and concerns in the home life and have difficulties in the academics, how can you work with that? With the academics? If you don't get through the personal issues, academic subjects won't matter to them. You have to work through the personal emotions of what they're going through. (p. 2)

Thus, Debra demonstrates empathy and compassion toward students, believing in them and attempting to build relationships with them where academics may not be the priority. For her, establishing, building, and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal students are necessary elements of achieving "success".

Aboriginal Support Teacher - Abdullah

Background and Role

Having worked at Surrey's Aboriginal Youth Program for one year, Abdullah, an Indo-Canadian, is currently one of two Support Teachers in an inner-city school in north Surrey with a student population of approximately 1,250.

The mission statement of the school states that it will "provide a safe, cooperative environment to promote social, intellectual and creative growth for staff, students, and parents. This environment fosters healthy, productive, responsible citizens of the global community" (Surrey School District, 2006c, p. 1). The goals of the school reflect this mission statement: "[It is a] designated inner city school with a large multicultural population. In order to meet the needs of our diverse population, the following goals were identified: to improve academic performance in the core curricular areas (English, Social Studies, Math, and Science); to foster social responsibility within and among students" (p. 1). Although the focus of the school is on academic performance, its needs are varied and many, including those of Aboriginal students.

Abdullah was allocated two blocks of Supporting Teacher for Aboriginal students and five blocks of regular classroom teaching in junior Math and Science for this school year. He became interested in working with Aboriginal students because he felt that "there's such a need for these students to understand that there are people out there who care about them, and who can identify with what they're going through and who can actually empathize with what's going on in their lives" (Interview, June 22, 2006, p. 1). As an Aboriginal Support Teacher, Abdullah's main role is to develop and increase students' skills in both numeracy and literacy. He was told that it was not a "social program, it's not a behavioural program where we try to teach ways to cope with different things going on in life. Our main purpose is to raise the academic levels across the board" by identifying students needing assistance in Math, Science, English, Social Studies, and Humanities where they would go to those blocks and help students with their homework and project-based assignments (p. 1).

Issues and Challenges

Having 0% failure rate among Aboriginal students is one of the current goals set out in the school's plan. However, according to Abdullah, this mandate, although not impossible, is improbable at least for this school year. Instead, he believes that other issues are more important and relevant to Aboriginal students. First, he rejects the narrow definition of "success" -- the 100% passing rate among Aboriginal students – and offers another perspective:

> Does that 0% failure rate equate with success? I believe that success means that [students] see school as a tool to help them succeed in life, not something that they have to begrudgingly do or come to everyday. To me, that would be success. If school to them is fun, where they like to come, if we can decrease their skipping rate, have them in class more often, then that's success. Once we do that and they start enjoying school and we offer them First Nations programs on the side or during their regular school timetable, I think for me, that's success, where they identify school now as no longer that negative place where their mom or dad went to. (p. 5)

Second, the issue of identity plays an influential role in students' self-awareness. In particular, Abdullah notes that when he was working at the Aboriginal Youth Program, "it was cool to be Aboriginal" because they were all Aboriginal students; however, at this particular school, he states that "a lot of them don't know that they are First Nations or

Aboriginal. . . . We can let them know that they are and some people are quite adamant about the fact they want absolutely no First Nations support whatsoever. And, there's nothing we can do about that part" (p. 1). Whether Aboriginal identity enhances students' self-esteem, Abdullah comments:

> Yes and no. If a student clamours and craves attention and being Aboriginal gives it to him, as with any culture, then I think that identity will give him empowerment. If I'm helping them out in class and they look around and go, "Oh my God, he's helping me out because I'm Aboriginal and everyone is looking at me because I'm Aboriginal", then for those students, identity becomes more of a detriment where it's no longer a sense of empowerment. They feel dumb and they feel dumb because I'm Aboriginal. Sometimes, they associate with that. (p. 8)

To address these issues, Abdullah sees a number of challenges. He believes that "funding is the biggest thing" (p. 5). Allocating only four blocks this year is not adequate to accommodate the sixty Aboriginal students at the school, according to Abdullah; instead, he would like to see two or three full time teachers.[59] Another challenge is the parents who are against the concept of a "state-run school" as they "just hated it because of the their own experiences, and they would transfer those feelings onto their children, so they feel the same way, that the White man caused the pain, and so when they come to school, they see it as an institution where their parents were harassed, sexually abused, physically abused" (pp. 2-3). Thus, the legacy of colonization becomes another challenge for both students and teachers. Although Abdullah presents a somewhat negative stereotype of Aboriginal peoples, his point is passionately stated from past teaching experiences at the Aboriginal Youth Program:

> If somehow we can start the healing, I think that a lot of these students may identify better with school, that this school is different from the residential schools of their parents. In order to make students succeed in school, it has to be a social program along with an academic program. You cannot separate the two. Because if a kid is more concerned with the fact that they never had breakfast and they have to come to school and they're hungry because their mom is drunk or she's used crystal meth or they have to babysit their sister or brother because their mom is passed out, and they don't come to school because of that, I mean those issues need to be dealt with first. Getting an "A" in Math is secondary on their list. We need to first of all address the issues at home. Once we address those issues, I think, everything else should start to fall into place. (p. 3)

---

[59] For the next school year, only two blocks will be given to the Aboriginal Support Teacher. Each full time teacher is allocated seven blocks.

Impact and Recommendations

From Abdullah's point of view, the methods used to assist students within the classroom have shortcomings and therefore are "not the most effective way to go about it" (p. 2). Even more frank, Abdullah claims that because resources are limited,

> simply by the allotment of blocks we have . . . with what we're given, it's setting up for failure. Mind you, we have helped a lot of students, but in the whole scheme of things, I would like to see the number of Aboriginal students who dropped out as a percentage and related to the overall population of the school. I would like to see the success rates for Aboriginal students in each of the grades, their overall marks as well, to see where they are and compare them with the rest of the population. . . . that would give us a better indication of our effectiveness. We may be helping more students than we realize, and I may have made a difference in more people than I realize, but until I get the numbers, I can't judge our success or failure on it. (pp. 6-7).

As another indication of limited effectiveness, not all teachers or all Aboriginal students are receptive to having a Support Worker in the classroom: some teachers may view this assistance as an intrusion or disruption in their classroom and some students may view it as an academic stigma, being labeled and segregated from the rest of the class.

In response to these issues and challenges, Abdullah provides a number of insightful suggestions to improve the Aboriginal Support Teacher program. First, a more clear and specific identification process would be helpful in order to understand better the needs of the students, to have an "open forum" and to have "more First Nations activities not just for Aboriginal students but for all students" (pp. 4-5). Second, Abdullah believes that schools

> have to integrate [Aboriginal students] where they feel proud about themselves but at the same time understand that in order to function in society, they will have to make contributions to that society, to be part of it. . . . Be a part of the system but still feel proud of who you are . . . .
>
> These kids say it themselves -- think of First Nations and what are the first things that come to mind? -- a drunk, someone who smokes salmon who eats smoked salmon, drinks Lysol. Those types of words. We have to somehow make them feel that those are wrong, that they're not like that, and how we do that is through education, through workshops, to give them a sense of empowerment. (p. 4)

Third, Abdullah believes that employing more Aboriginal teachers would help but cautions this recommendation. Surrey should hire more Aboriginal teachers "who want to work with

the system and who want to better the system as opposed to an individual who is bringing a lot of hurt with them, [who may] be more detrimental to the students" (p. 7). They would in turn become positive role models in the classroom. Fourth, teachers, regardless of ethnic background, need to be understanding, flexible, and carry a positive demeanor toward all their students, not just Aboriginal students. How teachers relate to students in class has "such a profound impact, not just for that one day, but it could for the whole year, or worse yet, for the rest of their lives" (p. 7). In an impassioned anecdote, Abdullah elaborates:

> Teachers need to be more flexible. They need to understand that there isn't a one-set rule for all students. For one student who may be getting 90% and hands in a late assignment, and let's say you take 5 marks off in order to motivate the student in the future to hand in assignments on time, taking off marks and percentages do not work for all students. For a student who is getting 40 or 50% due to some other problems, and they hand in an assignment, two or three days late, and get 1/10, are you really doing a service to that student? He [or she] is already failing. Why make him [or her] fail even more? The point is that you need to be flexible. We need to understand that school may not be top of their priorities. . . .
>
> In the end, give them the benefit of the doubt. What's the worst thing that could happen? They could disappoint you again. So what? So they blew rule number 5? Well, rule number 5 was meant to be broken. So, please be flexible. Remember, we don't know because we can't identify until we've been in their shoes, and even if we stepped into those shoes, each person may still react differently. A lot of these kids have so many social problems, issues that are going on, and if we can somehow in our minds say, "Hey, you may be going through some pretty hard times right now. How can I help you get through it?" (p. 7)

Fifth, and perhaps most important according to Abdullah, is perseverance, not only on the part of students but of teachers:

> If we leave them, then we're giving up on them and they give up on themselves and give up later on in life. . . . But if we can give them the skill sets right now, then hopefully they can use that later in life. Right now it might not be important to them. We have to somehow make it important to them. . . . How do you heal a dying soul? (pp. 3, 4).

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

Within this school year, Abdullah has been able to connect with a number of Aboriginal students and he has seen his own development and growth as a professional

educator: "Once you empower them, that being Aboriginal is a great, I start to see that the lights would turn on their eyes. . . . I have become much more empathetic" (p. 3). Although Abdullah is of Indo-Canadian descent, he feels suited for this Aboriginal Support Teacher position:

> As a human, I feel qualified. As a person who can relate to pain, I feel qualified. As a person who has not gone through what their parents have gone through, I don't feel qualified. I will never have that pain. I will never be able to feel that hatred. I will never be able to feel that . . . just by looking at the teacher and seeing all teachers as those who abused you sexually, where a lot of these parents wouldn't even come to parent-teacher interviews. They wouldn't even step inside the door, and no matter what or how you identify with them, no matter what you said to them, they never saw you as a White man or ethnic minority or whatever. They saw you as a teacher working at a school. And that part, I could not break that mould, that I am different, that I tried so hard. And some people identified with that. But I feel qualified because I want to make a difference. (p. 6)

Abdullah feels hopeful of the programs. As an Aboriginal Support Teacher in Surrey, he believes that the district is moving in the right direction because "without hope, there's absolutely nothing. You have to be hopeful. I just think that we need more educated, qualified people leading this charge. And I would consider myself one of them. If we allow education to take place among Aboriginal students, society will be a much better place to live" (p. 9).

Aboriginal Support Teacher - David

Background and Role

Teaching at the same school as Abdullah, David is of Irish descent and is an Aboriginal Support Teacher with a background in teaching English.[60] Having started his teaching career in Mount Currie in a band-controlled school, David has over twenty years experience working directly with Aboriginal students before moving into the Surrey School District. Similar to Abdullah's role as a Support Teacher, David offers academic support to Aboriginal students but for English, Social Studies, and Humanities classes. More specifically, he helps identify Aboriginal students with academic needs and consults with

[60] David has been working in the Surrey School District for the past four years; however, as of next year, he will be at another secondary school with a similar position of Aboriginal Support Teacher and English Teacher.

their teachers to review strategies to support them in understanding the course content, either by providing tutorial assistance after school or within the classroom when convenient.

Issues and Challenges

David identifies a number of issues that he faces as an Aboriginal Support Teacher. First, the diversity among Aboriginal students in terms of scholastic abilities and capabilities becomes its own challenge, but David believes that students who are struggling academically do so mainly because of socio-economic circumstances that are beyond their control. Second, from his experience at this school, David feels that being "Aboriginal" for some of the students may carry "certain stigmas". Thus, some students are reticent to accept their own Aborginality:

> There is a definite stereotype out there. There are things that kids use against other kids because of where they're from, and some kids definitely feel it. I've had a few students this year who don't want attention drawn to themselves because they're Aboriginal, because there is an attitude out there that because they're Aboriginal, they're getting extra help, and some are very sensitive to that. (Interview, June 23, 2006, p. 2)

However, he also comments that some are "very proud of it" and that "something is coming" with this acceptance of an Aboriginal identity: "I see it more with Aboriginal schools though, but even here, despite some students' reluctance, there is a move to have that identity be part of their going forward" (p. 2). David elaborates further: "Identity has to be a positive thing. It's used as a label for students who use the extra help but identity should be used for something to give. Until that way of thinking changes, there will be that stigma attached" (p. 7). Third, the definition of "success" is again contested. While one measurement of success would be increasing graduation rates, David believes it could and should be more encompassing than that: "Success is for students to reach their goals, to be happy in what they do, and to have some satisfaction in their home lives. . . . Success would be when indicators such as socio-economic poverty and poor health would be decreased" (p. 6). Fourth, due to funding and a decrease in Aboriginal students for next school year, the number of Aboriginal Support Teacher blocks at this school will be reduced from seven to four, which may impact the students in receiving assistance.

Along with these issues are challenges that David feels need to be addressed. Logistically, David finds his schedule difficult to balance with five blocks of classroom teaching (English and Social Studies) and only two blocks of Aboriginal Support: "It was a matter of going into the classroom, finding time with the classroom teacher. Sometimes, it didn't always work, so it was disjointed" (p. 3). David finds that rushing from his own classes to support students in another class in the next period and back to teaching another of his classes in the following period is quite taxing. As well, while some teachers "really welcome the support", others are "lukewarm" (p. 3), which adds another dimension in supporting Aboriginal students. There are also classes where he feels there is too much assistance which may potentially overwhelm students -- regular classroom teacher, Aboriginal Support Worker, Learning Support Team teacher, teacher's assistant.

However, the hardest challenges are the school's goal of having a 100% pass rate, greater student engagement and parental support:

> To have a 100% pass rate is very lofty and very noble but it will take some doing because there are still a lot of other issues that have to be solved because there's still the socio-economic parameters that really have to be looked at. . . .
>
> We had the hardest time this year with students who were least successful who did not show up or would show up sporadically, and to get those kinds of things working has to come from the students first of all but you need the home support, you need the community support, and of course you need good teachers as well. You need all those things firing and if they're not, if there are other issues, what we do is just a band-aid solution. (p. 3)

David feels that there is a general apathy among students who are not attending school which may be a negative reaction and effect of their parents' own attitudes toward formal education, again a legacy of residential schooling:

> The spark isn't there. They think, "What difference does it make?" . . . Even people who were doing well, there is a certain feeling, no matter what they do, it will be taken away from them. (p. 6)
>
> Some kids don't have role models. In fairness to the parents, they didn't know how to be parents themselves because they didn't live with their parents, and there's an echo, a boom from that. . . . There are still some very elderly people who are connected with the land and traditions and they seem to be a lot more clear about who they are and what's important in life, and they'll tell you that the next generation has really gotten away from a lot of

> that -- getting into some of the social issues, like alcoholism, promiscuity, health issues -- those types of issues, very controversial. (p. 5)

The challenge then becomes one of motivating students where they need to feel

> optimism and confidence [of and for themselves]. . . . It's the student that shuts down and becomes resigned about the whole thing. Those are the ones who feel they are a failure. They give up easily. They have to use the idea that people do fail, that things don't always work out, but just because it doesn't, doesn't mean they should give up. (p. 6)

Ideally, however, David envisions a program that integrates Aboriginal students, regardless of academic needs, in the mainstream where they would be proud of their identity:

> Aboriginal students should get all the help they need academically. There should be a very good support network for those kids who are at risk, and there should be a system in place to recognize students who are doing well. (p. 4)
>
> My ideal would be the same for all my students, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, to succeed, to reach their goals and their potentials. And also to take pride the fact that they are Aboriginal, that it's a positive thing, not a stigma or even neutral thing, that it would be promoted in all schools as well. (p. 7)

Impact and Recommendations

During this particular school year and in this particular school, David hesitantly feels that the existing Aboriginal programs and his role as one of the Aboriginal Support Teachers are adequate to meet the needs of Aboriginal students. However, he does believe that Surrey, in its initiatives and advocacies for Aboriginal education, is progressing in the right direction: "in some ways, it feels like a band aid. There are some issues that we weren't able to address" (p. 8). Although one of the most successful highlights of this year was the Aboriginal fieldtrips to UBC's Museum of Anthropology and visiting members of the Stó:lo Nation, David believes that the cultural component of the program has been sacrificed somewhat and displaced by the academic focus on literacy and numeracy: "It's necessary but not sufficient. We have to keep doing what we're doing and do a little more of it" (p. 7), and although "there are a lot of bugs to be worked out as there's still a long way to go as far as catching the students who are most at risk . . . it's better than not having anything" (p. 4).

To improve this program, David believes that greater support in terms of hours allocated for his position would be beneficial. To service sixty students between two Aboriginal Support Workers and only four blocks to work within may not be sufficient given the identified needs of these students. Similarly, David recommends schools having more teachers and support workers who are Aboriginal in the classroom and who can then serve as role models to all students: "The role modeling is a major factor -- example is everything. The kids look around and see that the workers aren't Aboriginal and that's very important to them" (p. 8). In turn, and in effect, having such role models may build greater trust between the teacher and student. David also argues that there

> should be more of a connection between the social support network and the school because a lot of work happens in isolation. . . . We've identified some students who are at risk, but we investigated that ourselves, but that's fine. But if there was more of a heads-up, more of working in tandem between the social worker and teachers, we might have identified their needs sooner. (pp. 7-8).

Most important, according to David, is to build self-confidence in Aboriginal students where they "believe they can do it, and take control of their own lives. . . [where they] feel that they can succeed and not fail because of who they are" (p. 6).

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

"As long as the figures are as problematic as they are, I think we still have to label and identify students who aren't having success; on the other hand, we have to, for kids who are doing well, recognize their achievements and to work as a role model for students" (p. 4). In acknowledging and recognizing the students who need assistance and those who are "succeeding" academically, David is hopeful of the future of Aboriginal education and programs in Surrey. He has seen encouraging growth and change in acknowledging Aboriginality, being proud of its rich heritage:

> There is a movement toward self-awareness and self-pride . . . I could see in the First Nations schools a move toward building up the self-confidence and self-awareness that's necessary -- the pride and culture. . . . We're hopeful that with the academic support, we'll see some differences this year. (p. 3)
>
> I think things are getting better. I'm optimistic, and I think [Aboriginal peoples] deserve to take their rightful place in society. It's coming and I would like to be a part of that. (p. 8)

After working with Aboriginal students for over two decades, David continues to have passion in teaching and a positive outlook in terms of the direction of Aboriginal education. He foresees a greater acceptance of "Aboriginalness" for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, but he admits that it will take much work and time to evolve and develop.

BC First Nations Studies 12 Teacher / Tutorial Assistant - Brenda

Background and Role

Having a Master's in English as a Second Language examining genre-specific writing and reading, Brenda first started teaching in Surrey as an ESL teacher eight years ago. She helped students make the bridge into full academic courses and thus takes an "ESL perspective" when teaching. She sees herself as Canadian with a mix of British and French ancestry. Currently, she teaches a variety of English and Social Studies courses along with BC First Nations Studies 12 and is designated as Aboriginal Tutorial Assistant at her secondary school that has a student population of approximately 1,300.[61] Located in a middle / upper-middle class setting in north Surrey, the school's mission statement / motto is "Teaching for a Lifetime of Learning" where "together we will develop the balance of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for individuals to achieve their personal best as responsible, successful citizens in a changing world (Surrey School District, 2006d, p. 1). The school's goals mainly focus on academic achievement and appear rather "traditional" where "performance in everything, all students have a gift to give, school is the centre of the community, effective teaching is direct instruction which results in effective learning, and safe environment for all must exist before effective teaching and learning can occur" (p. 1).

With a wide range of course work, Brenda has various roles to assist the thirty self-identified Aboriginal students at her school with a wide range of their academic abilities and capabilities. For academically strong students, Brenda helps them understand "what their dreams, goals, and aspirations are" and checks in with them and their teachers to see "how they're feeling, how their stress level is . . . and getting a sense of where they're at emotionally and how they're coping with school" (Interview, May 17, 2006, p. 1). For academically challenged students, Brenda will consult with the classroom teacher regarding any tests, homework, or assignments that students may study or work on and submit:

> [Working with the classroom teacher], I get a sense of how I can support them, and if I support them, then they're more willing to work with me to make arrangements for that student. If that teacher needs an assistant in that classroom, I would come in and be that assistant for the classroom during my Aboriginal Tutorial block. . . . If it's a non-academic subject, I tend to try to work well with those students. If I can help the student do well in that course and I can get them caught up or be ahead in that course, that teacher might be willing to let me remove the student for twenty minutes to help him catch up in an academic subject. (p. 2)

Brenda was recruited at this school because of her ESL background, and because she took an undergraduate course at UBC (Anthropology 220) focusing on First Nations history, she became the BC First Nations Studies 12 teacher for the school.[62] From the start of her teaching career, however, Brenda has continued to incorporate Aboriginal history and culture in her classes:

> I've done talks and workshops regarding First Nations BC West Coast art in Grade 4 classrooms when I was in the elementary school. I've done a thematic book based on residential schooling for my ESL class before. I'd brought in Aboriginal speakers to my ESL classes . . . and I love developing curriculum and developing materials and making them accessible to students. That's what drives me, that's my goal, my challenge: to see students who would be at the frustration level, who would struggle, to see them do well. . . . The challenge of the course excited me. It was a new challenge. . . . I was encouraged to do this, and I was being supported. (pp. 4-5)

Goals and Approaches

By teaching BC First Nations Studies 12, Brenda admits to having a "naive utilitarian belief that if we do good things, if we educate, if we help people understand then the future will be better. My core values are still very much that naivety, that with understanding comes knowledge and with that knowledge, there will be a better future and a better world" (p. 5). The class has twenty-eight students from various ethnic backgrounds with a wide range of abilities and capabilities, but only a few are status and non-status Aboriginal students. However, not all students appear to have a positive attitude toward this elected course:

---

[61] This is Brenda's second year of teaching BC First Nations Studies 12.

> I've got some students whom you might think of as being Trailer Park Boys. I've got a couple of students who said they phoned the DOF [Department of Fisheries] on Aboriginals whom they thought were illegally fishing in the river, yet they are very good friends with one of the full-status Aboriginal students in the class. . . . I still have about ten students with that knee-jerk reaction and comments in the class, but I think that for about eight of them, I've won over. (p. 6)

However, Brenda remains hopeful and is encouraged with some changes in students' attitudes and growing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history and issues as she further expresses her goals for teaching the course:

> I've noticed that some students have understood more and more and have a richer understanding. He [referring to one of the students in the above quotation] now respects and understands more about his good friend's culture. Hopefully in the future, he will learn to understand the need for a negotiated land claim settlement and to understand that spending twelve years to decide what will be on the negotiation table is stalling, and to understand that in the 1920s they needed passes, that in 1960 they got the right to vote, that in 1905 they said that an Indian is something other than human, to understand the systemic racism that was within the system that they had to overcome and that it's still there to a certain extent. Hopefully, he will become an advocate for that change or will understand and be supportive of it rather than the knee-jerk reaction against it. . . .
>
> Whether they agree or disagree on an issue is not as important to me. Instead, I want them to understand the history, the underpinnings so that they will work for change because these issues will have to be resolved. And I said to them that I don't know how to resolve these issues, but I need them to understand what's going on and I want them to think carefully why are certain stakeholders doing certain things, and even among the Aboriginal communities, there will be a range of beliefs -- start thinking about why each of these stakeholders have a different opinion. (p. 6)

In approaching this course, Brenda follows both the Integrated Resource Package, which outlines the prescribed learning outcomes and student achievement indicators, and the teacher's manual closely but continually re-evaluates and reflects on the course content and delivery, always keeping in mind the varying learning styles and abilities of her students:

> I look at it by asking myself: How did I teach it last year? How can I do it better? How can I make it work better for a student who is academically low?

[62] Only two secondary schools in Surrey offer BC First Nations Studies 12 during the 2005/2006 school year, and each school has only one class of it.

> How can I make it interesting and challenging for the gifted student? How can I make it a tight lesson plan that conveys the contents and the background information? How can I make the context clearer? (p. 5)

These personal attitudes show a professionalism within Brenda's teaching, and the constant reflections on how to improve her teaching this course show characteristics of "best practices" of a master teacher.

Issues and Challenges

Despite her passion for teaching BC First Nations Studies 12, Brenda sees a number of issues and challenges. First, she is unsatisfied with the structure, marking, and weight of the provincial examination:

> I do feel the real weight of the provincial exam. . . . When my students are judged in this exam, it's going to be about a fifty-fifty mix between strong and weak. It's going to look all over the map. It's also hard to know because there are eighteen to twenty potential essay topics and they will have to write two essays on the exam. It's a guessing game.
>
> Unfortunately, last year, most of the students wanted to get out of there after an hour. A number of them wrote one essay and left the other one blank. Many did the multiple choice in twenty minutes, but when I look at the wording of the multiple choice questions, they are academically dense. Those questions were worded from Grade 9 level to third-year university. So my students who are sitting at Grade 3, 4, 5 instructional level or reading skill will not understand those questions because they won't understand the jargon. . . . I'm using the 6-point marking scale, but I realize that in order to get a 6 on the exam, the student has to be a naturally gifted writer. Most students' natural writing ability is between a 2 and a 5. (p. 7)
>
> It would be nice for [the provincial exam] to tell us that these are the eight to ten possible topics for this year's provincial exam essay because it's so broad. . . . It would make it less of a fishing expedition. I could live with the provincial exam because part of me wants to know if I had prepared them well enough and have done a good job, but part of me looks at the reflection journals -- what did they write? how did they understand it? what did it mean to them? (p. 9)

Brenda sees the struggles of some of her students with the provincial examination and, as an advocate for all her students, does not find it fair.

Second, Brenda senses apathy among a few students in her BC First Nations Studies 12 class and Aboriginal tutorial block: "It's hard because being a classroom teacher and the tutorial teacher, you can try to help the student as much as you can, but they can also sabotage on their own end. Sometimes, they really don't want to be helped. They really want to fail" (p. 4). However, she still acknowledges that they are still children who need encouragement and development: "There comes a point where I'll keep making the offer [of helping] but I can't do it all for them. But I'm not going to turn and say, 'tough love', because I recognize they are youth, they are children, they're growing and learning, they're working toward adulthood. I shouldn't penalize them because they're not adults yet" (p. 4). A few students may be challenging in other ways: "Some of the students are gifted -- very strong academically. Some are attention deficit and can be willfully disobedient and rude in the class. But I try very hard to work with all of them. I try to see the positives in all of them" (p. 3).

Third, the course is in jeopardy of not being offered next year because of low enrollment numbers. Brenda finds this disconcerting because she feels she will not grow professionally and will forget what she has taught and, in turn, how to improve the lessons. She sees the decline in enrollment as a general movement and trend among students toward the "academic" stream of math and sciences in order to enter university.[63] She also sees the students' misguided perception of BC First Nations Studies 12 as a "non-academic" course, an unfortunate reputation it has carried from the past and continues to carry in the present:

> Prior to me teaching this course, this course was not seen as being academic. I know the teacher who had it before me for three years and she found that 70-80% of her students were the 'dregs', the 'bottom-feeders', the ones who were rude, skipped out, didn't want to be in class, and I have about six right now, and I'm constantly tracking to see if they skipped out. I'm also dealing with correct behaviour. I had to call parents on a few of the students who were rude to the guest speaker, who slept during the presentation of the guest speaker. But I have so many that are enjoying it and learning so much that I find it very energizing. (pp. 7-8).

[63] In a recent conversation with Brenda during the 2006/2007 school year, she informed me that unfortunately because of low enrollment, BC First Nations Studies 12 at her school was cancelled. Instead, she is teaching another block of Social Studies.

Fourth, as with other interviewees, Brenda sees "success" as more than just academic achievement and performance on exams. Instead, "success" is when students reach their own personal goals, whether it's drumming and music, going into forestry management, or hairdressing school. Brenda "always tries to accent the positives" and "not crowd [the students]", knowing that "they don't want to feel they are special needs or special education students" (p. 3).

Fifth, Aboriginal identity appears important to both students and parents at this school as "some are very calmly self-assured in being Aboriginal while some are wanting to be more low-keyed" (p. 3). Brenda feels that most of her Aboriginal students are "very mature and know a lot about themselves and their history and culture, maybe because of their families or relatives" (p. 3), and they "value the identity whether they are academically weak or strong" (p. 4).

Impact and Recommendations

In reviewing the course, Brenda has both positive and negative feedback. Brenda believes that

> the strength of the course is the fact that it is so cohesive. It's having a look at the whole of what it means to be an Aboriginal today in British Columbia and what's come before, what has shaped them, and how strong and resilient they've been and how they're growing and changing. They're not the static, plastic token thing in a museum, but are affirming, dynamic, shifting, changing, self-determining group. A lot of the students are starting to see the richness of that and starting to understand the complexities behind a lot of the issues. (pp. 8-9)

However, "the drawback is that it's so large, so broad, so comprehensive that it's easy for students to make those knee-jerk reactions based on very little information" (p. 9). She finds it difficult to provide students with the background knowledge for a "clear understanding for a clear debate, not one of those knee-jerk reaction debates based on very little information but one that encourages them to use logic and evidence to support their ideas" (p. 9).

Similarly, Brenda believes that the textbook, although providing a comprehensive survey of Aboriginal peoples in BC, can be improved:

> I love the range of information it gives. I love the "Voices" boxes and the definitions. I like the way it's laid out. I love the thematic information. . . .

However, some of the key visuals in the teacher's manual have boxes but the information is not in the text. The kids and I are left guessing. . . . A lot of it seems to assume outside knowledge, extraneous to the textbook. Sometimes the key visuals are divorced from the textbook and they are assuming a global summary of the ideas. . . .

Perhaps the key visuals are designed by professors at the universities, the team that wrote it where they're looking at it as an adult with an adult knowledge and understanding with twenty years of knowledge that they bring to that chapter as opposed to a student from another country who doesn't have that prior knowledge or a Canadian student who can't recall or remember what they learned last year. They don't know where to start when they look at some of those key visuals. The information is not there, and sometimes the students are left frustrated, banging their heads against the wall because they can't find it, and some give up. (p. 8)

However, having this course offered at this school has generally benefited the students and school as they are more exposed to the Aboriginal legacy of colonialism. Brenda believes it has made a difference in the students' lives as she sees changes and progress in them:

I think it has more of an effect on the students' outside life and their maturity as an individual because it changes how they interact with other students in school. Some of them are aware of who the Aboriginal students are. . . I think that there is a certain level of respect toward Aboriginals rather than that Trailer Park Boys attitude and comments. But, I'm not that naive in thinking that it changes their day-to-day interaction in the school, but I do think it changes their understanding of what's happening in the news right now, and I think it will make them better people. (p. 9)

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

In an anecdote about one particular Aboriginal student in her BC First Nations Studies 12 class who has learning difficulties, Brenda encapsulates her driving spirit and dedication as a professional educator:

When I think of one of the students who wrote after seeing the video on Tommy Prince, it was very moving and considering his literacy level at Grade 4, it was the best in the class -- the most succinct, the most on, he was evaluating it, he was thinking about it, summarizing it, and it really spoke what he wrote. Here is a student who hates writing, hates academics, hates school, yet there was much thought and effort in his writing. There was a richness and depth to what he was saying. It was really powerful. It's those things that I celebrate, and he was the one who would phone the Fisheries

> Department to arrest the First Nations fishermen. That's the change I want to see in students.[64] (p. 6)
>
> (Student's sample writing piece on Tommy Prince)[65]
> Tommy Prince is a Canadian hero in my eyes. He continued to put his full effort no matter what the people thought about him. It was a mistake for him to continue going back to war because he was getting old and probably was getting slower in his old age. I think it was terrible how people treated him when he came back from the war. I also think it was hard to see such a hero fall to a level of drinking so much. It was nice that Tommy was finally starting to get recognized as a hero in his later years and not just a burnout. It was kind of sad too, to see just as he was getting connected back to his children after so many years, he had passed away and his children were left with only small amounts of memories and a very large need for a lot more. Overall, Tommy seemed to have lived a very difficult life, from all the years of continuous wars, to losing his family, and being called a burnout. Hopefully with more people seeing this film, they will realize that Tommy Prince was truly a Canadian hero. (pp. 6-7)

Focusing on curriculum design and sharing them, Brenda shows passion in her teaching, always reflecting on past lessons to be adopted or adapted for future lessons and concludes: "I love it. I really, really love it" (p. 10). She feels that she does and can make a difference in the lives of all her students regardless of their academic, social, economic, or ethnic background.

BC First Nations Studies 12 Teacher - Stacey

Background and Role

Stacey has been teaching in the Surrey School District for approximately ten years, and he is of British ancestry. With a personal interest in BC history, Stacey was approached by his administrators to teach BC First Nations Studies 12 at his inner-city high school located in north Surrey.[66] With a student population of approximately 1,200, the school's mission statement is to "create a caring, accepting learning community where students fulfill their potential individually and collectively, participate in quality learning experiences,

---

64 Born Thomas George Prince, Tommy is now considered a Canadian hero who served in WW II as a Sergeant with the Canadian Parachute Battalion and was awarded the Military Medal for "exceptional bravery in the field". Though he served his country, Tommy was not able to vote in Canada upon his heroic return.
65 The sample writing was part of the transcript as Brenda read it out as part of the interview.
66 Stacey is teaching BC First Nations Studies 12 for the first time during the 2005/2006 school year.

recognize and celebrate their diversity and accomplishments, and prepare for a lifetime of challenges and opportunities" (Surrey School District, 2006d).

Having the highest transient rate of secondary schools in the district, the school faces a number of needs: approximately 30% of the students are ESL; approximately 12.5% are enrolled in Special Education or other special programs; and approximately 10% are self-identified as Aboriginal students. To help support these students, the school has implemented a number of programs: Alternate (for social behavioural students); Teen Mothers program in the school district (the only existing one in the district); Aboriginal Support; Youth Educational Support; and after school tutorials. As specific goals, the school is focusing on improving (1) reading comprehension from Grades 8 to 12, (2) socially responsible behaviour of students, and (3) the opportunities in Career Education.

Before Stacey, another teacher taught the course for about four years; however, Stacey was "under the direction that the course be more academic this time around -- a little less focus on the arts and culture and more on the reading and writing" (Interview, May 1, 2006, p. 1). At the start of the year, Stacey had twenty-two students in the class but now has twelve, and of those left, six are of Aboriginal descent. He explains the drastic drop in enrollment:

> This school is unique. It has the Growing Together program, which is a teen-mother's program. I had thirteen Growing Together girls in my class and I'm now down to six and many don't succeed in this semester because of attendance issues. That's in a large part why the numbers went down, and, frankly, the students aren't that academically strong as a whole as a Social Studies 11 class would be. (p. 2)

Stacey is also assisted by the school's Aboriginal Support Worker who helps organize events and people outside the classroom -- guest speakers, fieldtrips, and cultural events. He is also involved in helping students connect with their Indian band and applying for scholarships because "most of the students here are really disconnected from their heritage and their band" (p. 4).

Goals and Approaches

By teaching this course, Stacey hopes to connect students to their history "because it is British Columbia's history and these students are from BC, and whether they're Native or non-Native is irrelevant. I think that for better or for worse, it's going to be part of our future in the very near time frame and I think it's important for the students to understand those issues. They will be deciding on it. They will be voting on things" (p. 2). Even more passionate, Stacey wishes to relate to the students through topics that are relevant to them, teaching in a way that the

> kids will leave the class at the end of the semester going: "Wow! That was better than I imagined; that it wasn't as painful; it wasn't as boring; that I learned a lot, things make sense to me now when I read the newspaper or I hear issues, and maybe furthering my knowledge and take another course". That would be one of my goals in teaching this course. (p. 3)

Stacey's grander vision, however, is to, "within a very short period of time, create the course so that it is part of the school's social fabric where students would look forward to taking the course when they enter the school and there is a buzz around the course and there is this enthusiasm around it because it's exciting and interesting with tremendous fieldtrip potential, and it's relevant to students' lives and they understand it. That's the goal, but, right now, it's not happening" (p. 3).

Issues and Challenges

In attempting to achieve these goals, Stacey raises a number of issues and challenges. The most pressing is the apparent lack of background knowledge among students for the course in order to understand the context of the topics, including "the ideas behind colonialism, the ideas behind exploration, the reasons some of the issues are still around, the reasons for it to happen throughout history" (p. 1). Similarly, Stacey finds that students become somewhat confused with the legal units of the course regarding policies and government decisions as those sections become more politically technical. Instead, students appear to be more interested in the personal stories and the "day-to-day accounts of what the people actually did or what happened to them. It's about people who were their own age and the stories that happened to them that seem to resonate with a lot of the students" (p. 2).

More challenging, however, is the impact of parents on their children of which Stacey is becoming more aware. He is also more cognizant of the influence and role of mainstream society on Aboriginal peoples that has and continues to encroach on their traditions and beliefs:

> The residential school system has played such a crushing role in how education is viewed by First Nations people, and with almost every kid who's Native I find is struggling behaviourally and academically, you can trace some of that source to their parents' issues, parents' perspective, relationships within the family. That's amplified with First Nations people in that there isn't the emphasis on a Westernized, standardized education, and that's a tremendous challenge that is fraught with dangers because society is moving in a certain direction and you almost have to participate in order to keep up. But does that mean you give up your culture and certain ways of doing things? I think there has to be a balance, a marrying of the two for First Nations people, but that's a bit presumptuous of me to jump in there and say that, but I do think it goes back to the family. (p. 5)

In terms of identity, Stacey noticed that Aboriginal students in his course have throughout the semester begun to comment that they are members of the Métis or other First Nations group to the class and appear quite proud of their heritage. However, he also cautions that occasionally a stigma still exists and is still attached when certain fieldtrips are concerned, being labeled by some as a "fluffy cultural expedition because they're Native" that they are receiving "preferential treatment and handled with care" (p. 4). Although not prevalent, the attitude is apparent and Stacey understands students' reluctance to be "singled out" as being Aboriginal (p. 4).

In terms of "success", Stacey does not differentiate between his Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and emphasizes the process of learning rather than the performance results:

> Within a general academic setting, success is really getting the students to realize their potential and that sounds very cliché but it is true. I hope to get students to enjoy learning, get them to realize what they are capable of. Failure isn't the end all and be all. They have options opened to them. On a more specific level in my course, success would be getting students to connect with who they are culturally and also to realize that they can live up to the expectations that are set forth for other students. They don't have to have lower expectations because they are Aboriginal or First Nations, and that's something I strongly believe in my course and I teach it as an academic course. It is an academic course and I have high expectations for my students,

the same as I would have for my non-Native students in any course I teach. (p. 4)

Impact and Recommendations

Although Stacey is teaching BC First Nations Studies 12 for the first time this year, he believes that it has "tremendous possibilities" in terms of "learning opportunities and relevance" beyond the textbook with current events (p. 2). He also comments on the variety of teaching strategies -- guest speakers, visits to the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, and class discussions on contemporary issues. However, Stacey is also aware of the fact that students mis-perceive and thus erroneously assume that this course is a "soft course" designed for Aboriginal students. When comparing this course to Social Studies 11, Stacey believes that the two subjects are extremely relevant but BC First Nations Studies 12 should not compete with and replace Social Studies 11 in terms of graduation requirements, yet it should be a Grade 12 provincially examinable course on its own.

The course has, however, impacted students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, as Stacey notes:

> It's getting them to question a lot of things that happened. Native students are now making reference to 'we', which they didn't do earlier in the semester. They're making those connections to being 'Native' and sharing the culture that we're discussing in class . . .
>
> And then the non-Native, who might be Christian, you have to offer a very fine line and that's always a juggling act, and it's something I have to be very diligent about, that this is not a course focused on being negative toward the Church but trying to offer a balance. And you see kids who are at times sensitive to those things. You really have to monitor that sensitivity in the class, but the students are understanding better as to who they are, whether Native or non-Native. (p. 3)

Unfortunately, from Stacey's perspective, the course this year has not made an impact on the school: "In fact, from what I understand, [the course] isn't even offered on the students' timetables for next year, which of course I'm not very happy about, but whether that was an oversight or deliberate omission, I don't know" (p. 3). Yet, despite this potential drawback, he is still optimistic of the Aboriginal programs offered in the district:

> I do see a lot of small group opportunities for the students where they are much smaller numbers and are able to work with the teacher on academics and there is quite a bit of support here for students. . . . And I've always said that if you lower the expectations a bit, people will meet those expectations and not much more. Ideally, I would like to see in my vision that students no longer have the need for that First Nations support, but that would be years down the road. (p. 6)

Reflections and Concluding Remarks

Upon reflection, Stacey is very cognizant, yet humbled, of being a member of the dominant society whose ancestry has colonized Aboriginal peoples. In an anecdote, Stacey recalls meeting a First Nations man after UBC's convocation ceremony to receive his degree that spoke to his own ethnicity:

> It was his proudest moment when he walked across the stage to get his degree. This guy was in jail, he was an alcoholic, violent, all sorts of horrible experiences. He was very proud and he looked up at his mother and she was asleep in the audience, and he said that shattered him. It devastated him. Afterward, he asked his mother why she was sleeping, and she replied to him that it was a White man's education, and what are you worried about that for? And he didn't recover from that. And I have never forgotten that -- pretty powerful. . . .
>
> I do often feel aware of who I am up there. I am a White middle-aged man. Who am I to be sharing this knowledge, let alone teach it? I'm always aware and try to be sensitive. I don't have a lot of the answers . . . but any course that's revolving around issues of race, ethnicity, culture, history, politics, colonialism is a fascinating course and should be taught and shouldn't be shied away from, but I think it has to be approached with an objective, balanced, and flexible approach. I hope it succeeds. It needs to succeed. (p. 6)

Despite the uncertain future of this course at this school, Stacey remains hopeful that as a teacher, he will continue to instill in students not only a sense of history but a place in society, to be connected with one's cultural roots and people. He believes that BC First Nations Studies 12 is one of those courses that can accomplish those ideals.[67]

---

[67] In a follow-up informal conversation with Stacey during the 2006/2007 school year, I learned that, like what happened at Brenda's school, the BC First Nations Studies 12 course was cancelled for the following year due to low enrollment.

Concluding Remarks on the Interviews

The eight interviews provide a glimpse into the different roles and programs that the Surrey School District offers to its Aboriginal students. Despite their different backgrounds and roles, all of the interviewees are advocates for all students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

A number of common issues and concerns were voiced in the interviews. First, they all want to see higher academic achievement and graduation rates among Aboriginal students as part of their "success". However, some voiced that the cultural component of Aboriginal education is being overshadowed by the emphasis on academic performance, especially with Surrey's focus on literacy and numeracy. Second, a number of interviewees mentioned a need for greater parental involvement in their child's education. A lack of parental support and participation appear to be a barrier to "success". Third, teachers need to be made aware of Aboriginal issues and be more culturally sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal students in which Gayle (District Principal of Aboriginal Education) states that she tries to "win them over one at a time". A number of the interviewees also agree that not only teachers in the classroom need to be supportive but also the administration as they are the leaders of the schools, allocating teaching blocks to accommodate Aboriginal students. Fourth, the interviewees perceive that Aboriginal identity plays an influential role in students in that they tend to downplay their cultural heritage.

To address these common needs, the interviewees voiced various recommendations. First, in order to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples and to address negative stereotypes and images of them, greater integration of Aboriginal content into the curriculum (not only in textbooks) and having more Aboriginal role models appear vital. Second, maintaining district-wide Aboriginal camps where teachers, support workers, and students participate in team-building activities would help raise the self-esteem of Aboriginal students. Third, to develop greater cross-cultural responsiveness between and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, an open forum for discussion and invitations for Aboriginal presenters, especially Elders, should be implemented.

By sharing their concerns and recommendations, the interviewees provided a number of insights and anecdotes into Aboriginal education in Surrey. Although the Aboriginal Department mandates its policies to its various workers (Helping Teachers, Cultural

Facilitators, Child and Youth Care Workers, Support Teachers), each has his or her own interpretation and delivery of them, and each is working hard at addressing the needs of Aboriginal students.

CHAPTER 8
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The eight interviews offer very important insights on the present circumstances and future direction of Aboriginal education not only in Surrey but also more generally in British Columbia. This chapter presents a thematic analysis of the interviews. Despite the varied responses in the interviews, a number of common ideas were shared and discussed by the interviewees. Two major yet seemingly dichotomous themes became apparent that reflect the Ministry of Education's *Aboriginal Report -- How are We Doing?*: areas of concerns and areas of steady improvements of Aboriginal students. First, all interviewees voiced some sense of disconnectedness in which Aboriginal students feel somewhat alienated in the education system. Second, however, all interviewees also voiced some sense of hope as the provincial ministry and the Surrey School District are beginning to include Aboriginal peoples into their present and future educational policies.

A Sense of Disconnectedness

Although all of the interviewees continually support the needs of Aboriginal students, they also detect disconnectedness at various levels. First, the issue of "Aboriginality" is a concern as students do not easily or comfortably embrace their identity. Second, "success" appears to have polarized meanings as different people have different interpretations of and expectations for it. Third, teacher-education training programs at universities do not seem to prepare their students adequately in addressing Aboriginal peoples and issues. Fourth, Aboriginal parents appear indifferent toward their children's education which has led to this disconnectedness and even disengagement. Fifth, teachers feeling the pressures of provincial exams, curricular expectations, and limited resources may inadvertently overlook deeper Aboriginal issues. Ultimately, however, this sense of disconnectedness needs to be addressed as it becomes a potential barrier to the future of Aboriginal education and programs in Surrey.

Identity and Culture

When discussing identity, most of the interviewees agree that students are generally proud of their Aboriginal culture and heritage and would occasionally vocalize it in class. However, they also agree that most Aboriginal students tend to be reticent about their Aboriginality whenever the latter perceive themselves to be singled out or are receiving "special treatment" simply because of their Aboriginal background. This identification may not be intentional or even "real", but as long as students believe they are being labeled, they are more willing to shy away from their Aboriginal identity. They, for the most part, do not want to be taken out of the classroom for fieldtrips or presentations that are made exclusive to them. This disconnectedness perhaps is "normal" as students, especially teenagers, want a sense of belonging and acceptance among their peers, and segregating them or treating them differently in school or in the classroom either by teachers or support workers may negatively affect that bond. According to Pepper and Henry (1991), without a sense of belonging, students may experience

> withdraw, become nonverbal, or seek attention through inappropriate and nonproductive behaviour. [Aboriginal students] need to have their cultural needs met. [They] need to experience a sense of significance, a feeling of acceptance and friendly good-will by their peers, and a sense of respect and caring by their teachers. [Aboriginal students] need to be valued as a learner and as a person with dignity and worthwhileness. (p. 148)

As a result, Aboriginal students' identity may be more associated with their peers in the dominant culture than with their own culture, at least during these high school years.

However, issues of identity do correlate with educational achievement (Deyhle, 1989), and "the retention of heritage and a strong cultural identity has been identified as being the single most important factor in predicting . . . academic achievement" (Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003, p. 237). The interviewees hope that over time, Aboriginal students will accept, embrace, and celebrate their "Aboriginalness" more positively. As Mendieta (2003) writes about identity politics:

> [Identities] are not only unstable because they are fragile negotiations, but also because they are always succumbing to the shock of visual mis-recognition. . . . They are always constituted, constructed, invented, imagined, projected, suffered and celebrated. Identities are never univocal, stable, or innocent. . . [and] in the process of constituting them and negotiating them, we discover that we were like we never imagined ourselves to have been. And

> simultaneously, we discover that we have become something that has little resemblance to what we thought we were. (pp. 407, 412)

To exacerbate this issue, students may also feel awkward with their Aboriginal identity when textbooks (e.g., Social Studies) tend to depict Aboriginal peoples historically static and stereotypic. These negative images do not help foster positive cross-cultural responsiveness between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. As Deyhle (1995) argues, "school context and curriculum are not neutral" as racism "frames the stage and remains a barrier" for Aboriginal students (p. 61). She advocates that a "culturally non-responsive curriculum is a greater threat to those whose own cultural 'identity' is insecure" (Deyhle, 1992, p. 42).

In response, one main goal of Aboriginal education, as expressed by the interviewees, is to re-connect the students to their cultural heritage such that they will not feel embarrassed or ashamed or that it is replacing or compromising their identities with their peers. Yet, a vicious cycle needs to be broken where Aboriginal students appear caught in the middle. On the one hand, they want to belong but seem attracted to the dominant culture. On the other hand, the dominant culture has not fully embraced them. Education in cultural sensitivity for non-Aboriginal students becomes essential in this case, as all students should learn to appreciate the depth and breadth of Aboriginal histories and cultures.

Success

Although all the interviewees acknowledge and agree that increasing academic achievement and graduation rates are measurements of "success", as determined and prescribed by the Ministry of Education, they believe that it should be measured more broadly and holistically. Thus, there appears to be a disconnectedness and polarization between the ministry and interviewees' definition of "success". While the former focuses on academic goals and academic results (both in terms of literacy and numeracy), the latter believes in having a greater balance between the scholastic performance and the social/cultural components of education, especially for Aboriginal students. The Ministry of Education and effectually school districts and schools have tended to focus on provincial exam results, and to some extent the Fraser Institute has exacerbated this issue through its annual publication of rating all the schools in BC, both private and public, basing its ranking

mostly on performance results. From Deyhle's perspective, however, tests become events that judge personal academic performance in the classroom and thus counterproductive to learning: "To continue to judge children with criteria that will assure their continued failure is to ignore the underlying problem of clarifying misunderstandings of the operating forces within the existing system in order that conflict can be minimized and learning promoted" (Deyhle, 1983, p. 84).

Some interviewees believe that "success" is achieved when students reach their potential and attain personal goals. Others believe it is achieved when Aboriginal students become transformed when they become aware, proud, and accepting of their own Aboriginal background. Yet, others believe it is achieved when Aboriginal students simply stay and persevere in the education system, regardless of scholastic performance. At the core, most of the interviewees believe that "success", regardless of the definition and criteria, is measured one student at a time. They believe that a more holistic approach to "success" should be used in order to re-connect students to the goals of education, one that acknowledges and works with each student individually:

> It seems paramount to remind our school boards and teachers that effective classroom learning styles and context need to compliment or overlap with the learning styles and context present in the child's non-school environment. The behaviour of the teachers, the social organization of the classes, the types of participation structures, and the means of academic assessment need to be carefully analyzed in light of the culture of the students. It is only then that we can move from description to prescription to create a culturally congruent education for [Aboriginal students]. (Deyhle, 1983, p. 83).

Thus, "success" needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed to have greater relevance for Aboriginal students. Moreover, a number of interviewees believe that we all need to look at these issues more positively rather than negatively, where we should focus on what the ministry, districts, schools, teachers, parents, and students are doing well instead of merely criticizing them and attempting to "fix" the "problem".

Universities

A number of interviewees voiced their concerns regarding the teacher-education programs at universities. Programs reveal a level of disconnectedness as not all student-teachers are exposed to the cultural and historical sensitivities needed in teaching Aboriginal

students (or teaching non-Aboriginal students about Aboriginal peoples). Some interviewees recommend that all student-teachers in any teacher-training program, regardless of subject specialty, take a course in Aboriginal Studies in order to understand and appreciate more about Aboriginal peoples and issues. In turn, this training may lead to greater cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity of the future teachers toward Aboriginal students. Mandating such a course, however, will take political will among university administration, faculty, and students. Nonetheless, if the goal of university teacher-education programs is to train effective teachers, learning about and from Aboriginal peoples cannot be overlooked.[68]

Parents

As one of the main concerns among the interviewees, many Aboriginal parents have become somewhat estranged from their children's education.[69] With little or no involvement in the schools, a number of Aboriginal parents appear disconnected from the education system, sensing that systemic/institutionalized racism is still very much alive. Studies have shown, however, that when families are involved and participating in their children's education through reinforcing the curriculum, promoting cognitive development at home, and volunteering in the classroom, children "achieve higher grades, have better attendance rates, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviours, graduate at higher rates, and have greater involvement in higher education" (Friedel, 1999, p. 139). All the interviewees agree with this belief and want parents more involved not only in the schooling but the education of their children.

As a lasting legacy of colonialism, however, some Aboriginal parents have learned to mistrust the educational system, having lost so much of their culture and traditions, and more importantly having lost their dignity and identity, through their experiences in residential schooling: "alienation that they feel about their own negative cultural experiences in residential or public schools and their unwillingness to support or promote the aims of the

---

[68] As a sign of improvement and importance, the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria has recently mandated a required course in Aboriginal epistemology and education for student teachers commencing September 2008.

[69] Again, not all Aboriginal parents are disconnected with their children's education but from the interviewees' observations, many unfortunately are.

school" (Friedel, 1999, p. 141). Parents see their own schooling experience as a "cultural invasion" where residential schools

> assumed responsibility for educating and raising children and that Native people, convinced by administrators of the schools, began to question their own capabilities of being able to raise their children. Gradually, it becomes accepted that schools and administrators do a better job – they are the "experts" and their assumed positions of power are not to be questioned. . . . This can be seen as "cultural occupation". (p. 141)

To exacerbate the issue, according to Friedel, public schools "tend to remain closed to Native parents; they continue to exist as isolated 'islands' outside the community . . . [in which] perhaps public schools can be seen as 'cultural occupation'" (pp. 141-142). Thus, to address this "outside" perspective and mentality, interviewees believe that schools should invite Aboriginal parents to the facility even before requesting their involvement. To enter physically into a school is a major step for some Aboriginal parents as negative images and memories may still exist from their own experiences of residential schooling. Teachers, in turn, must take initiative in playing a more significant role in parental communication and contact.

Teachers

Teachers, according to some of the interviewees, however, are unfortunately reluctant or hesitant to incorporate more Aboriginal content into their courses, mainly because of both time constraints, due to exam pressures, and limited resources at the secondary level.[70] Provincial exams appear to have taken precedence and predominance in the senior Social Studies classes, and teachers in turn have mainly adapted (whether consciously or unconsciously) and have become well-adapted to teaching to the test.

Furthermore, textbooks may not offer adequate information about Aboriginal peoples and issues as most provide fragmentary snapshots of them with little historical context. Often neglected in the units on Aboriginal peoples is the understanding that knowing the person makes the culture known. Thus, to be effective teachers and communicators,

---

[70] Of course this is not true for all teachers as some show exceptional sensitivity toward their Aboriginal students.

> educators need to listen to the counsel of Aboriginal educators who from their own experience are in position to know what makes education culturally appropriate for Aboriginal students. . . .
>
> [To] understand Aboriginal culture one must understand the Aboriginal people, the individuals who are living it now. Traditions are only one aspect of the ever-changing dynamic within a culture. So to focus on traditional dress , food, music, ceremonies, and artifacts freeze a culture in time and perpetuate stereotypes. Artifacts are static. People and their values, beliefs, feelings, and thoughts are dynamic, and these define the culture. (Doige, 2003, pp. 148, 150)

In this sense, there is a disconnectedness between the curriculum, the course, and available resources as topics become prioritized according to the corresponding exam specifications and not necessarily according to students' relevance or interests.

A Sense of Hope

Despite all these disconnections, the interviewees also shared a sense of hope in the future of Aboriginal education and programs in Surrey. First, Aboriginal identity appears more acceptable as students get older and more mature. Second, although the Aboriginal Department in Surrey is concerned with academic performance of their Aboriginal students, it appears more important that high school retention of them (and hence a higher graduation rate) is a main goal. Third, the ministry in establishing Enhancement Agreements, elevating the profile (and hence status) of BC First Nations Studies 12, and giving Aboriginal leaders a voice in education are all major steps forward toward Aboriginal self-determination. Fourth, the establishment of Aboriginal Parent Advisory Committees will hopefully encourage greater participation of Aboriginal parents in their children's education. Fifth, with greater cultural awareness, teachers can have a greater impact on the education of Aboriginal students. Without having and seeing these hopes, the interviewees believe that such policies and programs would be ineffectual and thus purposeless.

Identity and Culture

As Surrey continues to build on its programs, Aboriginal identity and culture among Aboriginal students appear to be developing. There are growing signs that Aboriginal students are beginning to feel more comfortable with and are more willing to embrace their

identity and culture as they begin to open and share their heritage to classmates without embarrassment or shame. Not only would this acceptance of their identity increase their own self-awareness and self-esteem, it would honour their cultural heritage and the people who were forced to lose their identity in the past. However, acknowledgement and acceptance of their Aboriginal identity may take time and maturity, in which a few interviewees observed: as students enter their senior years of high school, they tend to be more aware and accepting of their Aboriginal heritage. This was seen most by the two BC First Nations Studies 12 teachers who by the end of the course did notice positive changes in the attitudes of some of their Aboriginal students toward being "Aboriginal".

In addition, the District's Aboriginal Department plays a significant role to help encourage and promote Aboriginal cultures, including the organization of an Aboriginal week, the graduation and awards ceremony for Aboriginal students, and the distribution of resources and funds at the various levels to assist Aboriginal students (including allocation of Helping Teachers, Support Teachers, Child and Youth Care Workers, and Cultural Facilitators to the various schools in Surrey). Some of the interviewees perceive the district's commitment as essential not only to the development of Aboriginal students' cultural identity but also to the improvement of their academic performance. Financially and politically, the interviewees agree that these programs and activities must continue in order Aboriginal students to "succeed".

Although some textbooks still occasionally portray Aboriginal peoples and issues with subtle negativity, they have improved vastly within the last decade with greater inclusion and more positive profiles of prominent Aboriginal people, and in effect improving their self-image. However, the images and representation of Aboriginal peoples in textbooks need to be deconstructed in which students should not leave with a negative impression of them: classrooms need greater dialogue to address Aboriginal issues and to analyze critically any negative images and representations. The interviewees generally believe that with more inclusive and positive portrayals of Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal students will have a more positive identity about and of themselves. The interviewees hope that achieving this awareness will lead to greater respect and cross-cultural acceptance among and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Success

Although the emphasis remains on the academics, the fact that the interviewees acknowledge other measurements and forms of "success" shows progress in this area. Teachers should follow suit and perhaps reevaluate their evaluation methods. In addition, District programs such as the *Smuqwa*, the *Stqeye*, the *Kwasun*, and the *Kla-how-eya* all address the issues and needs of Aboriginal students at the secondary level, with the primary goal of keeping them in school, which in turn is the key to the students' "success".

From the ministry's and district's perspective, the statistics used for measuring "success" are encouraging for Surrey since the ministry began to record graduation rates and provincial exam results for Aboriginal students, showing steady improvements. Thus, "success" among Aboriginal students in Surrey is beginning to look more hopeful.

Provincial Ministry and School District

The fact that the ministry and school districts have established Aboriginal departments and implemented policies and programs specifically for Aboriginal students shows not only a level of concern but also a sense of hope in the future for these students. With the implementation of BC First Nations Studies 12 as a fully credited and a provincially examinable course, the ministry has provided a legitimized space for all students (and teachers) to learn and understand more about the rich histories and cultures of the Aboriginal peoples. By being an examinable course and an option for the senior Social Studies graduation requirement, BC First Nations Studies 12 has greatly increased its "status" and thus value and importance among the senior Social Studies courses.

Along with approving this course, the ministry has initiated a number of agreements about which the District Principal of Aboriginal Education in Surrey is quite excited and hopeful. In particular, Surrey's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (Draft) has put some weight and, in essence, has affirmed the district's Aboriginal policies and programs. She feels that both the provincial ministry and the school district are moving in the right direction together.

Parents

Hope is also seen in the role of parents as they are continually encouraged by the district to participate and be more engaged in the educational process of their children not only through parent-teacher interviews, which unfortunately tend to have poor turnouts, but through joining the Aboriginal Parent Advisory Committee or through home visits by the Support Workers, Cultural Facilitators, or Elders. As Elders become more involved in the district by contacting and meeting with Aboriginal parents, the hope is that the latter will not "fear" the schools anymore and will be more willing to participate in their children's education. With better communications between the schools and parents, the hope of establishing trust and not only a relationship but also a partnership between the two is being rebuilt and restored.

Teachers

In earlier studies, the cultural identity of teachers appeared to matter (see Kirkness, 1986; Sanders, 1987; and York, 1990). They showed that Aboriginal students felt that non-Aboriginal teachers (mainly "White") did not like their peoples and that more were willing to participate in classroom activities when their teacher was Aboriginal. However, in a more recent study, the opposite was found, but the authors do provide some precaution to their conclusion:

> [Being] exposed to Aboriginal teachers and/or Aboriginal languages in school is associated with lower educational attainment. The greater the number of Aboriginal teachers and/or exposure to Aboriginal language use in the classroom, the lower was the education attainment, and vice versa. . . .
>
> However, when the participants in this research were going to school (approximately 1948-1980), Aboriginal people may not have been much encouraged to take pride in their heritage. To be Native was to be excluded from the social, educational, and employment arenas enjoyed by the white majority, and therefore it may not have been desirable to imitate like role models or to seek identification with Aboriginal cultures. (Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003, p. 237)

Of the eight interviewees in this study, four are Aboriginal with non-teaching roles in the district -- District Principal of Aboriginal Education, Aboriginal Helping Teacher, Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Worker, and Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator. The other four, who are

non-Aboriginal, are classroom teachers -- Aboriginal Support Teachers and BC First Nations Studies 12 Teachers. Although a disconnect may appear in that those who are directly teaching Aboriginal students are not Aboriginal themselves, none of the interviewees (including those who are Aboriginal) feels that it matters. What is important is that the key roles of the former are Aboriginal who can help direct the teachers in implementing and delivering the curricula. They have become empowered and are empowering others in the process. They are the experts to whom others can turn to for assistance. Moreover, the non-Aboriginal teachers are quite cognizant of their cultural background and what that may mean to Aboriginal students. What makes these four teachers role models in the classroom is not their ethnicity but rather their care and compassion for their students as they continually build relationships and rapport with their students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.[71]

> The relationships between students and teachers create and maintain the learning dynamic that comes from open, honest discussion and negotiation. The relationships keep the personal, psychological meaning-making at a deep level where more is understood than information about different cultures. . . . Teachers must operate and plan around the dynamics of interpersonal relationships because knowing a person makes a culture known in personal, meaningful ways. (Doige, 2003, p. 152)

Through this process, students will hopefully have a sense of belonging.

With greater awareness of Aboriginal issues through professional development workshops at the provincial, district, and local school levels comes greater hope for "success" among Aboriginal students; however, teachers need to take the initiative to be educated and be willing to learn. The interviewees represent only a small proportion of teachers and professionals who have taken an interest in this educational matter. Teachers, in particular, are the ones who can bring hope to their students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and by being aware and sensitive to the needs of all their students, they can surely "make a difference".

---

[71] The relationship between students and their teachers is vital according to Deyhle and Swisher (1997) in their study of American Indian and Alaska Native education. Although the study is American, its discussion on low high school graduation rates resonates with those in Surrey.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided some thematic insights of eight professional educators in Surrey who help implement the district's Aboriginal policies and programs. With a wide range of experiences and roles, they offered their thoughts on what they saw as potential barriers to the "success" of Aboriginal students. These challenges include issues around Aboriginal identity, "success", teacher training, parental participation, and pressures of provincial curricula and exams. A central theme of feeling disconnected was evidenced during the interviews. However, they also provided suggestions as to how the programs in Surrey can improve and thus saw hope in the future of Aboriginal education: having greater acceptance of Aboriginality through a more positive self-image; focusing on other forms of "success" and celebrating those successes; having greater support and accountability from the provincial ministry and district; encouraging and inviting greater parental involvement; and having more compassionate and caring teachers.

None of the eight interviewees can think of another profession he or she would rather be in which is a testament to their dedication not only to the profession but also to the students they educate, whether it involves direct teaching in the classroom, developing resources for teachers, overseeing and implementing policies and programs, or acting as cultural facilitators and liaisons. Each has a story to tell of experiences and lessons, all from which, as a professional, I have learned the most.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with two main questions: 1) How are Aboriginal peoples represented and reflected in secondary school texts? 2) How do key individuals working within the Surrey School District perceive Aboriginal education as it is implemented in the district? Textbooks, policies and programs, and people are critical elements in schools. This concluding chapter summarizes the findings from the analysis of Social Studies textbooks, the examination of provincial and district policies and programs, and the interviews with eight professional educators in Surrey. Although the findings may be specific to the Surrey School District, they perhaps may also be extrapolated to other urban settings in the province. The chapter then offers pedagogical implications as relating to these findings and concludes with some personal reflections.

Summary of Findings

First, despite all the textbook reviews and evaluations that examine the treatment of Aboriginal peoples during the last four decades, today's recommended Social Studies textbooks at the secondary school level in BC still fall short. Improvements have been made. Derogatory (and thus racist) terms such as "noble savage" and "primitive Indians" are no longer accepted or acceptable. The images of Aboriginal peoples in textbooks have historically been challenged and criticized for their stereotypes, biases, and racism (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1974; Decore et al., 1981). Textbooks since the 1970s progressively began to reflect the "realities" and experiences of Aboriginal peoples. As a result, they have become more inclusive in content and approach; however, these cosmetic changes remain insignificant as Aboriginal peoples and issues remain mostly marginal in texts. Introduced as "special topics", Aboriginal peoples have become objectified and otherized as they are seen and interpreted as "different". They mainly disappear from the history canon but occasionally reappear, usually as another "interest group" or even "minority group" within the confines of multiculturalism, vying for political recognition and/or economic compensation. Because mainstream textbooks usually "re-present" Aboriginal peoples from a non-Aboriginal viewpoint, any inclusion of literary, visual, oral, or even tactile sources

from an Aboriginal person would be invaluable, not only to challenge the use of textbooks in the classroom but to enhance the learning experiences and perspectives of both students and teachers. As such, Battiste (1998) argues that educators

> cannot continue to allow Aboriginal students to be given a fragmented existence in a curriculum that does not mirror them, nor should they be denied understanding the historical context that has created that fragmentation. A postcolonial framework cannot be constructed without Indigenous people's renewing and reconstructing the principles underlying their own world view, environment, languages, and how these construct our humanity. (p. 24)

Social Studies textbooks are colonial in nature and perspective. Yet, glimpses of hope do exist as textbooks are beginning to provide greater inclusion of Aboriginal content and voice, challenging the pervasive Eurocentric narrative of Canada. Most significant is the development and implementation of BC First Nations Studies 12 -- the course and the recommended textbook. With an Aboriginal perspective and focus, the course depicts Aboriginal peoples in a more positive light, providing context and meaning to the images presented. This addition to the Social Studies strand is a bold yet needed step forward in Aboriginal education as it challenges teachers and students to re-examine the traditional canon and how it has stereotypically portrayed Aboriginal peoples.

Second, according to the educators interviewed in this study about Surrey Aboriginal students, the overwhelming concern and need of Aboriginal students is re-claiming their identity. Feeling trapped between the westernized mainstream culture and their own Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal students feel lost: on the one hand, they want to "fit" in with their non-Aboriginal peers; on the other hand, they want to embrace their Aboriginality. Reaching a balance between the two seems virtually impossible from their point of view. With Eurocentric curricula and textbooks, images of Aboriginal peoples are not always positively seen or interpreted. Raising their self-esteem through encouraging and appropriate experiences, which includes the school setting, becomes paramount in restoring a sense of connectedness:

> When children are treated with mutual respect and given encouragement in the form of acknowledgment, appreciation, or admiration of their constructive actions and contributions, they begin to bloom. The fundamental sense of connectiveness can be nurtured . . . As their illumination grows, their sense of power expands . . . They can then come to know and accept themselves, to resolve conflicts more constructively, to mature . . . Finally, they can feel

> whole with knowledge and experience of constructive models . . . Such growth of self-esteem is like that of a grass on the plains growing slowly, blade by blade, to become a rich and flowing tapestry that contributes to the cycle of life. (Pepper & Henry, 1991)

Third, a number of initiatives and partnership agreements between and among the provincial, district, and school levels have been signed in hopes of addressing Aboriginal students' needs. Enhancement Agreements, Accountability Contracts, District Reviews, and even Parent Education Engagement Partnership Projects have all been designed to help Aboriginal students "succeed". In the case of Surrey, its Aboriginal department is committed to improving literacy and numeracy among its Aboriginal students. Through the district helping teachers (who develop additional curricular resources), the support teachers in the schools (who help students in the classroom with learning difficulties), and the child and youth care workers (who counsel and guide Aboriginal students and educate all students about the various Aboriginal cultures), Surrey has taken initiatives to improve the "success" rates of its Aboriginal students. However, the classroom teachers are the ones who have the most direct effect on Aboriginal (and non-Aboriginal) students. Unfortunately and ironically, this is the main obstacle as most teachers continue to treat all students "equally", as treating students equally is not necessarily treating them equitably. The individual needs of Aboriginal students essentially must be addressed here where classroom teachers need to develop greater cultural sensitivity and understanding of Aboriginal ways of knowing.

Fourth, "success" needs to be broadened in its definition and expectations as it is much more than academic performance and achievement. Such a generalized recommendation, however, is not exclusive to Aboriginal students but is for all students In a traditional school setting, Deyhle (1983) warns educators: "To continue to judge children with criteria that will assure their continued failure is to ignore the underlying problem of clarifying misunderstandings of the operating forces within the existing system in order that conflict can be minimized and learning promoted" (p. 84). More specific to Surrey, however, "success" for Aboriginal students can be as basic as regular attendance, as stated by a number of interviewees. Being present in school, initially, may be more important than being a straight "A" student. Having a safe environment in the school, initially, may be more important than focusing on a history lesson. Small steps and small successes need to be not

only recognized and acknowledged but also expected. When these basic needs are met first, academic achievement and "success" can then be realized.

Pedagogical Implications

Pedagogically, four main implications from this study can help students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to "succeed": the training of student teachers and the professional development of teachers; the careful use of textbooks in the classroom; a more broadening criteria for evaluating and assessing students; and the honouring the 4Rs within the classroom. These implications, however, are not a panacea for the state of Aboriginal education or a blueprint to achieve "success" among Aboriginal students. Instead, they are insights gathered from scholars and educators, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with the hopes of acknowledging, recognizing, and embracing Aboriginal ways of knowing and ways of being.

Teacher Education Programs and Teacher In-Service

As teachers play a pivotal role in introducing and exposing their students to the issues of Aboriginal education so should the education programs at universities. The training of future teachers should include cultural awareness, understanding, and sensitivity toward Aboriginal issues regardless of the subject area and level taught. Ideally, an Aboriginal course that examines the histories and cultures of Canada's Aboriginal peoples should be mandated to all student-teachers entering the education program. At the very least, a core unit within a mandated course should expose student-teachers to such issues. By being more cognizant of the colonial history, student-teachers become better equipped in their future classes to address Aboriginal issues and concerns.

Similarly, workshops and in-service regarding Aboriginal issues for teachers should be part of professional development. Whether provincially or locally based by district or even by school, such in-service is invaluable for teachers as they need to be more aware of issues and concerns for their Aboriginal students to better equip them for "success". Discussions should not solely focus on cultural practices of Aboriginal peoples, though they too have much value; instead, issues of colonization, decolonization, Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology should all be introduced to teachers. In turn, teachers may empathize more

with the needs of their Aboriginal students and be able to facilitate better in their learning and educational success. In this sense, as Gayle optimistically states in her interview, we are trying to "win over one educator at a time" (Gayle, Interview, March 21, 2006, p. 10).

Textbooks in the Classroom

As ubiquitous as they are, textbooks should not and cannot be the sole resource of information for both students and teachers because of their inherent biases and exclusions, nor should they be used as the primary pedagogical tool in the classroom (Clark, 1996). Teachers should not use textbooks blindly; instead, textbooks should serve as guides for further exploration and investigation in building greater knowledge and understanding. In terms of Aboriginal experiences, complementary sources should be incorporated into the curriculum that presents a balance between the "negative" struggles and "positive" accomplishments. Because mainstream textbooks usually re-present Aboriginal peoples from a non-Aboriginal perspective, incorporating literary, visual, oral, and even tactile sources from or by Aboriginal peoples to be used as various forms of knowledge in the classroom would prove invaluable. These additional teaching sources would further enhance the learning experiences and perspectives of students and teachers alike.

Teachers should not only "teach" from the textbook but also about the textbook. Because survey textbooks cannot examine all events, peoples, and experiences, class discussions about biases (i.e., the inclusion / exclusion and use of language to conceptualize "history") become a crucial pedagogical responsibility of teachers. Integral in the discussion are critical thinking and empathy. Critical thinking encourages students and teachers to challenge textbook omissions and commissions. Empathy provides a new paradigm for students and teachers not only to perceive how their own culture is viewed from the "outside" but how to perceive other cultures from the "inside": it helps "develop the modes of reasoning for arriving at judgments concerning how people of differing backgrounds should be treated" (Wright and Coombs, 1981, p. 6). Students and teachers in turn may view Aboriginal peoples and issues from a different lens -- an acceptance of Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology.

Perhaps most important are the approach, attitude, and effort of teachers. Because teachers make most of the decisions regarding textbooks selections, they should be vigilant in

analyzing and challenging any possible inaccuracies, overexaggerations, and discriminations. That textbooks are provincially recommended does not licence them to indiscriminate use. At the very least, by synthesizing Aboriginal peoples and issues into the story of Canada, students will receive not only a more inclusive history but also a more "complete" history.[72] Textbooks that weave Aboriginal peoples, events, and issues into the tapestry of Canadian history provide such an opportunity. However, by introducing Aboriginal peoples and issues as "special topics", textbooks objectify and otherize them as they are seen and interpreted as "different". Students may in turn view Aboriginal peoples as simply another "interest group" or "minority group" vying for political recognition and economic compensation. Instead of an "interest" or "minority" group, Aboriginal peoples should be seen as having been and continue to be an essential and integrative part of Canadian society. Textbooks therefore should reflect and honour this fact: it is an issue of recognition, of affirmation, and of social justice.

Evaluation and Assessment

Educators need to redress the methods of evaluations / assessments in order to re-address the issue of "success. Emphasis remains heavily on the "academics" which hold a false allure of educational elitism as courses with provincial exams have an elevated status of being "superior" to those without, which tend to undermine other subjects (e.g., fine, industrial, and physical arts). Evaluation continues to be an imperial instrument that reinforces a colonial past -- a highly compartmentalized and "hierarchized" way of learning. Ultimately, by overemphasizing the academics, educational institutions deny the holism that is fundamental to Aboriginal education (Corbiere, 2000).

Although educators cannot change (at least at present) ministry policies of provincial evaluations, they can change their own policies in the classroom. Assessments need to be not only more holistic but also collaborative. Because much evaluation rests upon written work, students are only awarded merit if they conform to the Eurocentric standard of literacy; however, a more holistic approach would value a variety of learning styles and reward

---

[72] Though no history can ever by "complete", by synthesis, history can appear more comprehensive than fragmentary. Teachers, however, should continuously and vigilantly be aware that most history textbooks are colonial in nature with inherent biases.

students in different ways -- audio / oral, visual, symbolic, and kinesthetic. Assignments, in turn, need to reflect these forms of evaluation. Furthermore, viewing assessments as collaborative processes with students is an inclusionary necessity for educators. Providing opportunities for students to revise work is one key to "success".

Classroom Delivery and Dynamics

Despite being bound by ministry guidelines of the intended and prescribed learning outcomes, teachers within the curriculum have much autonomy in the classroom. In terms of content, teachers should introduce students to the history of Canada as a history of colonialism. Such a "revisionist" history will provide students with a more "real" understanding of and knowledge about Aboriginal peoples in their struggle toward self-determination. Included in this sociohistorical analysis is the continuing effects of internalized racism and oppression, as an Ojibwe educator discerningly describes: "We are not abstractly removed from history; we are products of it. The process of colonization, the Christianization and the 'civilization' of the indigenous people in this country continue today to affect both the colonizer and the colonized in more ways than we first discern" (as cited in Goulet, 2001, p. 70). Students need to understand that colonization

> was and is an oppressive system that strives to subjugate a group of people to keep them from having equitable access to the economic opportunities and social privileges enjoyed and taken for granted by the members of the colonizing group. Historical and ongoing colonization has a major impact on Aboriginal communities causing, among other things, disempowerment and poverty. (Goulet, 2001, p. 76)

Concepts within Aboriginal epistemology, such as the importance and interrelatedness of geography, orality, and spirituality, should also be incorporated into the class for students to have a better understanding and appreciation for other ways of knowing and learning -- an important step toward a decolonized narrative.

Exposure to various Aboriginal peoples, issues, and stories are also necessary as most mainstream and hence Eurocentric textbooks fail to include such information in a significant and meaningful way:

> The universality of Eurocentric creates a strategy of difference that leads to racism, which allows Europeans and colonialists to assert their privileges while exploiting Indigenous people and their knowledge. . . . Drawing on this

> limiting knowledge base, schools and curriculum texts have maintained the legacy of cultural and linguistic imperialism. Federal government policy that restricts First Nations schools to this curriculum bias exacerbates the problems of engaging Aboriginal students in this conspiracy. (Battiste, 1998, pp. 22, 23)

Moreover, teachers should incorporate a variety of teaching styles to meet the different needs of students, emphasizing a holistic approach. Some examples may include group and class discussions, active learning, group work with student-student interactions, and one-on-one interaction between the teacher and the student (Goulet, 2001); de-emphasizing a colonial approach, non-effective examples include lectures, seatwork, and worksheets.[73] Inviting Elders to share and impart stories and experiences is also an invaluable teaching tool. As "keepers of the wisdom, the libraries of Native communities, repositories of knowledge from time immemorial, a sort of Native World Wide Web" (Hanahano, 1999, p. 216), Elders bring knowledge, teachings, and wisdom to students and teachers. Teaching must also extend beyond the physical and artificial space of the sterile classroom and out to the community with field studies:

> The Native notion of place or sense of place refers to appreciation and recognition of certain lands, locations, natural monuments, and places as sacred and imbued with special power and spirit. . . . Thus for Natives, sense of place anchors their being and identity in who they are and their relationship to Mother Earth, and the places that have special meaning for tribal groups and members. (p. 215)

Most important, educators must build, develop, and maintain a warm, caring, sensitive, and trusting relationship with their students. In addition to these characteristics, teachers must demonstrate the four R's: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Students seek a better education -- "an education that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives" (p. 14). Building such personal connections and relationships will transform and empower both students and teachers that will begin to dismantle the legacy of colonialism.

---

[73] Although lectures, seatwork, and worksheets are not completely ineffective as teaching strategies, overuse and dependency on them are. A key is to have a variety of teaching styles.

Concluding Reflections

From examining the recommended textbooks used in high school Social Studies, I found that Aboriginal peoples are presented and integrated more than ever before. However, not all the images or representations depict a positive image of Aboriginal peoples as traditional stereotypes continue to exist, albeit more subtly and politely. Nonetheless, texts are usually under constant review with periodic changes over the years to adapt to revised or revamped provincial curricula (i.e., Integrated Resource Packages and corresponding prescribed learning outcomes). Though no text is perfect, they are improving in terms of highlighting Aboriginal content and issues.

From this journey of shared experiences and insights of the interviewees in this study, I have gained a richer understanding of and appreciation for the Aboriginal programs in the Surrey School District. I have been challenged professionally and personally by such dedicated, learned, and experienced individuals to better empathize with and comprehend the needs of Aboriginal students as they struggle with their own self-identity, their ownership of their education, and their shared colonized histories. More importantly, though, I have learned to celebrate the "successes" of Aboriginal students. As an educator, my journey into Aboriginal education has only begun, and this research represents only a small part of that journey. I am reminded of what Aboriginal education should be about by Fyre Jean Graveline, an Aboriginal scholar and author, who writes:

> Exemplary Indigenous education
> requires change for ourselves
> for our families
> for our communities
> in our relationship to Earth Mother.
> We want change in the systems
> in educational models currently in place
> We want to change the world.
> How can our Vision become a reality?
> Recognize that teaching and learning is a process
> a transformational cycle.
> An exemplary Indigenous educational practice
> is also a Healing one.
> Power with Not power over
> Revitalization Not acculturation
> will help us move
> Into a more hopeful Future
> will create

A greater Circle of Interconnectedness.
Will contribute
To a healthier
Happier future for us All.
Megwetch.
(Graveline, 2002, p. 21)

A disconnection, however, does and still exists between the present educational system and that of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology: Aboriginal students continue to "see themselves and their heritage as [only] part of the educational system" and, in effect, "Indigenous heritage and the transmission of that heritage are missing" (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 88). Thus, Aboriginal students need to re-connect with their dynamic heritages. They need to be free from "the self-doubt, inferiority complexes, and confusion created by public . . . schooling", and instead "develop the self-confidence and tools necessary to reclaim and restore [their] knowledge through curriculum development and implementation" (p. 91). Though the ideal educational setting would acknowledge, accept, and apply Aboriginal knowledge and epistemology, the process of "decolonizing the system" is fraught with uncertainty and at times even contested. Teachers, in turn, play an essential part in this process as they need to become active partners rather than passive observers in this educational journey, to see and believe that Aboriginal students can, do, and will "succeed".

In exploring and addressing the question from the provincial Aboriginal Report, "How are we doing?", the Surrey School District has a promising future as it continues to implement various programs in an attempt to meet any and all types of needs among its Aboriginal student population. Statistically, in comparing the Surrey to the province, Aboriginal students in the district are generally not fairing much worse than other districts, nor are they fairing much better; however, they are steadily improving empirically.

Regardless of the recorded statistics, "success" is occurring daily among Aboriginal students in the District, but to see the "success" of each student, we need to look beyond the performance standards and results with a new lens and a broader definition. We need to look at and respect the differences in Indigenous knowledge and epistemology among Aboriginal students in order for them to develop self-awareness and self-identity. We need to look at and honour their dreams and aspirations in order to develop with them manageable and

realistic personal goals. We need to look at and acknowledge the unique gifts that they provide to the class in order for them to value their "individualness". But most importantly, we need to walk with them in this short journey in life through high school in order to see them not only as students in the class but as citizens and human beings in the global community. With hope, these reflections will become reality.

CHAPTER 10
EPILOGUE

During the revision stage of this dissertation, I was fortunate to have an informal conversation with Gayle, the District Principal of Aboriginal Education for the Surrey School District, near the end of the school year (2006/2007).[74] It was more than a year ago since I first interviewed her. In our discussion, she reflected on past and current challenges, but she continues to remain cautiously hopeful and optimistic for the future of the programs for Aboriginal students.

The first challenge Gayle mentioned was the restructuring of her department in supporting Aboriginal students in which she found teachers resistant to the change, a time of "growing pains":

> Teachers struggling with the adjustment of no longer having a support worker per se anymore. Instead they each had titles of Youth Care Worker, Assistant, or Cultural Facilitator. And realizing that classroom teachers are now responsible for their Aboriginal students versus a segregation model when we were pulling kids. . . . That year was a transitional time for teachers to finally realize that Aboriginal kids weren't going to get pulled out of their classes on a regular basis. They were falling further and further behind. We were setting them up. We were setting them up for failure. We were disservicing them by thinking we were trying to support them and teach them about who they are. (Gayle, Interview, May 2, 2007)

During this transitional time, the Aboriginal Department completed and published a research project that surveyed 1,400 people (administrators, teachers, and Aboriginal parents and students) regarding the state of Aboriginal education in the district. Gayle pointed out that the results, especially among Aboriginal students, confirmed her own beliefs about Aboriginal students and their concerns: "They were very clear. Don't pull us out. Don't treat us any differently. We want to part of, not separated, when teaching everybody who we are." Thus, students did not want "special treatment" which confirms what the interviewees had stated regarding Aboriginal students and their reticence in accepting their identity.

---

[74] I went to Gayle's office at the Student Support Centre for an informal, follow-up discussion regarding the progress of Surrey's Aboriginal programs. The dialogue took place on May 2, 2007.

Gayle's most difficult challenge, however, continues to be "getting people on board", both administrators and teachers alike. As leaders of the school, administrators have some influence in determining the priorities of their school of which Aboriginal education, according to Gayle, should be one of them. However,

> if an administrator seriously looks at the Aboriginal student population they'll come to realize that they're not doing well, but I can't get them to do that. But I have the support of the superintendents, the trustees, but I just can't get through to the administrators to be the leaders to seriously take a look at our Aboriginal student population and see how well they're doing, and realize we are losing a lot of these students.

As for teachers, Gayle provided some anecdotes of her department's teachers who were once either an Aboriginal Cultural Facilitator or Youth Care Worker in the schools:

> Teachers were expecting my teachers to address the health issues, the hygiene, and the head lice. Whatever it was, they expected that my teacher was going to take care of it and not look at them as a qualified educator. That was challenging for them. . . . One of my teachers had to volunteer in every committee in order to be accepted as a teacher. It seems like as Aboriginal educators, they have to go an extra mile in order to prove that they're qualified to do what they do. It's challenging.

Thus, teachers can be just as much of a hindrance as an assistance to the needs of Aboriginal students. Unfortunately, Gayle sees an uphill struggle in this area.

In terms of improvement during the last year, Gayle would like to believe that there have been some, "but realistically, no, because we tend to as educators fall into the trap of 'we treat all our students equally'. . . . But equality does not necessarily mean equal. . . . We know that there are some student populations, and in particular an Aboriginal student population, that is in dire need of support to better make them prepared for the real world, because we are creating uneducated people. And that sense of belonging is still not there". According to Gayle, educators therefore need to

> step away from treating all students the same way and once we can go beyond that and start focusing on each student versus a group of students . . . there will be improvements. And the high schools are the real challenge. We lose a of lot students in the high schools. The question is 'why' and what can we do to help? As educators we all need to ask the question – "what can we do differently?"

When educators treat students equally they in effect ignore the important differences in learning and knowing; equity, however, allows students to be seen as individuals with individual strengths and weaknesses. According to Gayle, educators must break the adage that treating students equally is a sign of being fair because realistically it has the opposite effect on students.

Despite facing these challenges and frustrations, Gayle is hopeful, especially with the most recent district review when the ministry team opened the meeting by directly asking the superintendents and district principals what the district is doing for Aboriginal students to help them "succeed". Although this question is not a new issue for the district, it has placed the concerns and needs of Aboriginal students as one of the priorities for the district and hence for the schools:

> With the review, the ministry has said this has to be addressed and I think it's one of the best things that ever happened for me because now it forces administrators to be aware of what is happening out there with our Aboriginal students -- the real things. . . . It will force administrators and teachers to look at the Aboriginal students differently, and hopefully they will do things differently.

Gayle acknowledges that the Western model has not been successful for Aboriginal students; however, working within it will be the challenge where a shift in focus is needed. Both the province and district have pledged greater commitment to Aboriginal education with the goal of having "success for every student". It is now up to administrators and teachers to live up to this commitment. Ending with a positive outlook, Gayle poses three questions for educators: 1) Who are your Aboriginal students? 2) How are they doing? 3) If they are not doing well, what can you do differently to make things better? In addressing these three questions, educators will hopefully be more knowledgeable about and show greater understanding for their students and their individual needs. As an educator, I too must address these questions in my classroom -- a difficult yet extremely rewarding challenge. It is with this focused goal that Gayle and her support staff aspire to, that gives them hope for the future not only of Aboriginal education but for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the district. In the inspiring and encouraging words of Arthur Solomon, an Anishnawbe spiritual leader:

“Education”

The traditional way of education
was by example and experience
and by storytelling.
The first principle involved was total respect
and acceptance of the one to be taught.
And that learning was a continuous process
from birth to death.
It was a total continuity without interruption.
Its nature was like a fountain
that gives many colours and flavours of water
and that whoever chose could drink as much or as little
as they wanted to and whenever they wished.
The teaching strictly adhered
to the sacredness of life whether of human
or animals or plants.
But in the course of history, there came a disruption.
And then education became “compulsory miseducation”
for another purpose, and the circle of life was broken
and the continuity ended.
It is that continuity which is now taken
up again in the spiritual rebirth
of the people.
(Solomon, 1991, p. 79)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adam, H. (2000). "Divided Memories: Confronting the Crimes of Previous Regimes." *Telos*, 118 (Winter), 87-108.

Alcoff, L. M. (2000). "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" In Paula M. L. Moya & Michael R. Hamen-Garcia (Eds.), *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (pp. 312-354). Berkley, CA: University of California.

Archibald, J. (1995). "Locally Developed Native Studies Curriculum: An Historical and Philosophical Rationale." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 288-312). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Ashley, J. S. & Jarratt-Ziemski, K. (1999). "Superficiality and Bias: The (Mis)Treatment of Native Americans in U.S. Government Textbooks." *American Indian Quarterly*, 23 (3/4), 49-62.

Assembly of First Nations. (1994). *Breaking the Silence: An Interpretative Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nations Individuals.* Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations.

Barman, J. (1995). "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children." In Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, & J. D. Wilson (Eds.), *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (pp. 337-358). Calgary: Detselig Enterprises.

Barman, J. (1995). "Separate and Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School, 1884-1920." In Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, & J. D. Wilson (Eds.), *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (pp. 57-80). Calgary: Detselig Enterprises.

Barman, J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (1987). "The Challenge of Indian Education: An Overview." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 2: The Challenge* (pp. 1-21). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Barman, J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (1986). "The Legacy of the Past: An Overview." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 1: The Legacy* (pp. 1-22). Vancouver: UBC.

Battiste, M. (2000). "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 192-208). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Battiste, M. (1998). "Enabling the Autumn Seed: Toward a Decolonized Approach to Aboriginal Knowledge, Language, and Education." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22 (1), 16-27.

Battiste, M. (1995). "Introduction." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. vii-xx). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Battiste, M. (1986). "Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Herbert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 1: The Legacy* (pp. 23-44). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Berkhofer Jr., R. F. (1995). *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse.* London: Harvard University.

Bolotta, A. et al. (2000). *Canada: Face of a Nation.* Scarborough, ON: Gage Educational Publishers.

Borrows, J. (2003). "Epilogue: Throwing the Baby Eagle Out of the Nest." In K. Campbell, C. Menzies, & B. Peacock, *BC First Nations Studies* (pp. 271-273). Victoria, BC: BC Ministry of Education.

Brade, C. R. M, Duncan, K. A., & Sokal, L. (2003). "The Path to Education in a Canadian Aboriginal Context." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 27 (2), 235-248.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2007a). "Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2007b). "First Nations Steering Committee Website" from http://www.fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2007c). "The New Relationship" from http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/newrelationship/down/new_relationship.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006a). "Accountability Contract School District 36 (Surrey)" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/2006/36.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006b). "District Accountability Contract" from http://www.bced.gov.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/05-06_guidelines.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006c). *BC First Nations Studies 12. Integrated Resource Package 2006.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006d). News Release Communiqué from http://www.2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/20060TP0116-000905 Attachments2.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006e). "Six-Year Dogwood Completion Rate. Public Schools Only 2000/01 - 2004/06: Provincial Summary" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/dogwood/prov.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006f). "Six-Year Dogwood Completion Rate. Public Schools Only 2000/01 - 2004/06: Surrey" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/dogwood/036.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006g). *Aboriginal Report -- How are We Doing? 2005/06 Province Public Schools Only.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2005). "District Review Guide 2005-2006" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/reviewguide.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2004). "District Review Report" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/036_2004.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2003). "Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements. A Guide for Success" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/ea_guide.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2002a). *Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources: A Guide.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2002b). "Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project. A Discussion Paper" from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/reports/parent_engage.pdf.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2000). *BC First Nations Studies 12. Integrated Resource Package 2000.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1998). *Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1988). *Social Studies Curriculum Guide: Grade Eight – Grade Eleven.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1997). *Aboriginal Support Worker's Handbook.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1996). *Integrating BC First Nations Studies: A K-10 Guide for Teachers.* Victoria: Ministry of Education, British Columbia.

Bruno-Jofre, R. & Schivalli, M. (2002). "Teaching History: A Discussion of Contemporary Challenges." *Encounters on Education.* Vol. 3, Fall, 117-127.

Burnaby, B. (1980). *Languages and Their Roles in Educating Native Children.* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Campbell, K., Menzies, C., & Peacock, B. (2003). *BC First Nations Studies.* Victoria: BC Ministry of Education.

Canada, Government of. (1969). *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Chrisjohn, R. D., Young, S. L., & Marun, M. (1997). *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada.* Penticton, BC: Theytus Books.

Clark, P. (2007). "Representations of Aboriginal Peoples in English Canadian History Textbooks: Towards Reconciliation." In Elizabeth A. Cole (Ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (pp. 81-120). Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield.

Clark, P. (June, 2002). "Case Study on Canadian History Textbooks and the Portrayal of Canada's First Nations." Proposal for Research Fellowship in History Education and Reconciliation, Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs.

Clark, P. (1996). "'Take it Away, Youth!' Visions of Canadian Identity in British Columbia Social Studies Textbooks, 1925-1989." Ph.D. dissertation, UBC.

Clark, P. & McKay, R. (1992). *Canada Revisited: A Social and Political History of Canada to 1911.* Edmonton: Arnold Publishing.

Clifford, J. (1986). "Introduction: Partial Truths." In James Clifford & George E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (pp. 1-26). Berkley, CA: University of California.

Coates, C. M. & Morgan, C. (2002). *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Vercheres and Laura Secord.* Toronto: University of Toronto.

Connelly, R. M., Chalmers, J. W., & Clark, C. A. F. (1965). "Missionaries and Indian Education." In L. G. P. Walter (Ed.), *The Education of Indian Children in Canada* (pp. 11-221). Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Cooke, K. (1984). *Images of Indians Held by Non-Indians: A Review of Current Canadian Research.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Corbiere, A. (2000). "Reconciling Epistemological Orientations: Toward a Wholistic Nishaabe (*Ojibwe/Odawa/Potowatomi*) Education." Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24(2), 113-119.

Cornbleth, C. (1990). *Curriculum in Context.* New York: Falmer.

Council on Interracial Books for Children. (1999). "Textbooks and Native Americans." In Arlene Hirschfelder, Paulette Fairbanks Molin, & Yvonne Wakim (Eds.), *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography* (pp. 89-110). Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow.

Cranny, M. & Moles, G. (2001). *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues.* Toronto: Prentice-Hall.

Cranny, M., Jarvis, G., Moles, G., & Seney, B. (1999). *Horizons: Canada Moves West.* Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Ginn.

Cranny, M. (1998). *Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations.* Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Ginn.

Cruxton, J. B. & Wilson, W. D. (1997). *Challenge of the West: A Canadian Retrospective From 1815-1915.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Cruxton, J. B. & Wilson, W. D. (1996). *Spotlight Canada (3rd Edition).* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Cruxton, J. B. & Walker, R. J. (1993). *Community Canada.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Davin, Nicholas Flood. (1879). "Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds" from http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/multimedia/pdf/davin_report.pdf.

Decore, A. M., Carney, R., Urion, C., Alexander, D., & Runte, R. (1981). *Native People in the Curriculum.* Edmonton: Alberta Education.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2007). "Backgrounder: The Residential School System" from http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs.schl_e.html.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2006). "Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" from http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sgmm_e.html.

Devine, H. (1991). "The Role of Archaeology in Teaching the Native Past: Ideology or Pedagogy?" *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 18 (1), 11-22.

Deyhle, D. (1995). "Navajo Youth and Anglo Racism: Cultural Integrity and Resistance." *Harvard Educational Review*, 65(3), pp. 403-444.

Deyhle, D. (1992). "Constructing Failure and Maintaining Cultural Identity: Navajo and Ute School Leavers." *Journal of American Indian Education*, 31(2), 24-47.

Deyhle, D. (1989). "Pushouts and Pullouts: Navajo and Ute School Leavers." *Journal of Navajo Education*, 6(2), 36-51.

Deyhle, D. (1983). "Measuring Success and Failure in the Classroom: Teacher Communication about Tests and the Understandings of Young Navajo Students." *Peabody Journal of Education*, 61(1), 67-85.

Dillabough, J. & McAlpine, L. (1996). "Rethinking Research Processes and Praxis in the Social Studies: The Cultural Politics of Methodology in Text Evaluation Research." *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 24 (2), 167-203.

Dion, S. D. (2004). "(RE)telling to Disrupt: Aboriginal People and Stories of Canadian History." *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 2(1), 51-76.

Doige, L. A. C. (2003). "A Missing Link: Between Traditional Aboriginal Education and the Western System of Education,." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 27(2), 144-160).

Douglas, V. R. (1987). "The Education of Urban Native Children: The Sacred Circle Project." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 2: The Challenge* (pp. 180-209). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Edwards, Catherine. (2000). "Proposal to Develop a Comprehensive Resource for the Revised First Nations Studies 12 Integrated Resource Package." Unpublished proposal.

Edwards, Elizabeth. (1999). "Photographs as Objects of Memory." In M. Kwint, C. Breward, & J. Aynsely (Eds.), *Material Memories* (pp. 221-236). New York: Berg.

Ermine, W. (1995). "Aboriginal Epistemology." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 101-112). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Fielding, J., & Evans, R. (2001). *Canada: Our Century, Our Story.* Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Fletcher, S. D. (2000). "Molded Images: First Nations People, Representation and the Ontario School Curriculum." In S. Goldstein & D. Selby (Eds.), *Weaving Connections: Educating for Peace, Social and Environmental Justice* (pp. 342-364). Toronto: Sumach Press.

Francis, D., et al. (1998). *Canadian Issues: A Contemporary Perspective.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Francis, D. (1997). *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp.

Francis, D. (1992). *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture.* Vancouver: Aresnal Pulp.

Friedel, T. L. (1999). "The Role of Aboriginal Parents in Public Education: Barriers to Change in an Urban Setting." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 23(2), 139 158.

Furniss, E. (1992). *Victims of Benevolence. The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Gibbins, R. & Ponting, J. R. (1978). *Canadians' Opinions and Attitudes Towards Indians and Indian Issues: Findings of a National Study.* Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Goulet, L. (2001). "Two Teachers of Aboriginal Students: Effective Practice in Sociohistorical Realities." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 25 (1), 68-82.

Granatstein, J. L. (1998). *Who Killed Canadian History?* Toronto: Harper Collins.

Grant, A. (1995). "The Challenge for Universities." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 208-223). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hampton, E. (1995). "Towards a Redefinition of Indian Education." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 5-46). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hanohano, P. (1999). "The Spiritual Imperative of Native Epistemology: Restoring Harmony and Balance to Education." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 23 (2), 206-219.

Henderson, J. S. Y. (2000). "*Ayukpachi*: Empowering Aboriginal Thought." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 248-278). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Henderson, J. S. Y. (2000). "Postcolonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 57-76). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Henderson, J. S. Y. (1995). "Treaties and Indian Education." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 245-261). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hesh, R. (1995). "Teacher Education and Aboriginal Opposition." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: the Circle Unfolds* (pp. 179-207). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hirschfelder, A. B. (1999). "The Treatment of Iroquois Indians in Selected American History Textbooks." In Arlene B. Hirschfelder, P.F. Molin, & Y. Wakin (Eds.), *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography* (pp. 119-132). Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow.

Hodgetts, A.B. (1968). *What Culture? What Heritage?* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Hookimaw-Witt, J. (1998). "Any Changes Since Residential School?" *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22 (2), 159-170.

House of Commons. (1984). *Equality Now!* Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Indian and Métis Conference, Committee of the Community Welfare Planning Council. (1964). *Survey of Canadian History Textbooks* (Submission to the curriculum Revision Committee, Manitoba Department of Education). Winnipeg, MB: Author.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Communications Branch). (2002). "Words First. An Evolving Terminology Relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada" from http://www.aincinac.gc.ca/pr/pub/wf/index_e.html.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1980). *An Overview of Some Recent Research on Attitudes in Canada Towards Indian People*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Ing, N. R. (2000). *Dealing With Shame and Unresolved Trauma: Residential School and its Impact on the 2nd and 3rd Generation Adults.* Ph.D. Dissertation, UBC.

Joe, D. L. (2000). *Shishalh Perception of Education.* M.Ed. Graduating Paper, UBC.

Kavanagh, G. (2000). *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum*. London: Leicester University.

Kawagley, A. O. & Barnhardt, R. (1999). "Education Indigenous to Place: Western Science Meets Native Reality." In Gregory A. Smith & Dilafruz R. Williams (Eds.), *Ecological Education in Action: On Weaving Education, Culture, and the Environment* (pp. 117-140). New York: SUNY Press.

Kelm, M. (1996). "'A Scandalous Procession': Residential Schooling and the Re/formation of Aboriginal Bodies, 1900-1950." *Native Studies Review*, 11(2), 52-87.

Kirkness, V. J. (1999). "Native Indian Teachers: A Key to Progress." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 23 (1), 57-63.

Kirkness, V.J. (1998). "The Critical State of Aboriginal Languages in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22(1), 93-107.

Kirkness, V. J. & Bowman, S. S. (1992). *First Nations and Schools: Triumphs and Struggles.* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Kirkness, V. J. & Barnhardt, R. (1991). "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's --Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30 (3), 1-15.

Kirkness, V. J. (1977). "Prejudice about Indians in Textbooks." *Journal of Reading*, 20 (7), 595-600.

Knockwood, I. & Thomas, G. (1992). *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Reservation School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.* Lockeport, NS: Roseway.

Laenui, P. (2000). "Processes of Decolonization." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 150-160). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Longboat, D. (1987). "First Nations Control of Education: The Path to our Survival as Nations." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 2: The Challenge* (pp. 22-42). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. (1974). *The Shocking Truth About Indians in Textbooks: Textbook Evaluation.* Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian Control of Indian Education.* Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.

Marker, M. (2006). "After the Makah Whale Hunt. Indigenous Knowledge and Limits to Multicultural Discourse." *Urban Education*, 41 (5), 1-24.

Marker, M. (2004). "Theories and Disciplines as Sites of Struggle: The Reproduction of Colonial Dominance Through the Controlling of Knowledge in the Academy." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 28 (1/2), 102-110.

Marker, M. (2000). Review from Anthropology & Education Quarterly December 2000 (31:4) from www.aaanet.org/cae/aeq/br/alaska.html.

McCluskey, M. L. (1993). *Evaluating American Indian Textbooks & Other Materials for the Classroom.* Helena, Montana: Montana Office of Public Instruction.

McDiarmid, G. & Pratt, D. (1971). Teaching Prejudice: A Content Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Authorized for Use in Ontario. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Miller, J. R. (1996). "Reading Photographs, Reading Voices: Documenting the History of Native Residential Schools." In Jennifer S. H. Brown & Elizabeth Viberts (Eds.), *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (pp. 461-481). Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Milloy, J. S. (2001). *"A National Crime" -- The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986.* Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Morin, H. (2004). "Student Performance Data and Research Tools to Ensure Aboriginal Student Success." In Jerry P. White, Paul Maxim, & Dan Beavon (Eds.), *Aboriginal Policy Research: Setting the Agenda for Change. Volume 1* (pp. 193-206). Toronto: Thompson Education Publishing.

Morton, D. (1988). *Towards Tomorrow: Canada in a Changing World - History.* Toronto: Harcourt Brace Javanovich.

National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian Control of Indian Education.* Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood.

O'Neill, G. P. (1984). "Prejudice Towards Indians in History Textbooks: A 1984 Profile." *The History and Social Science Teacher*, 20 (1), 33-39.

Orlowski, P. & Menzies, C. R. (2004). "Educating About Aboriginal Involvement with Forestry: The Tsimshian Experience – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 28 (1/2), 66-79.

Pepper, Floy C. & Henry, Steven L. (1991). "An Indian Perspective of Self-Esteem." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 18 (2), 145-160.

Persson, D. (1986). "The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1831-1970." In Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, & Don McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada. Volume 1: The Legacy* (pp. 150-168). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Podeh, E. (2000). "History and Memory in the Israeli Education System: The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in History Textbooks (1948-2000)." *History and Memory,* 12 (1), 65-100.

Reid, Carrie. (2003). "Introduction – The Voice of the Land is Our Language." In K. Campbell, C. Menzies, & B. Peacock, BC First Nations Studies (pp. 8-9). Victoria, BC: British Columbia Ministry of Education.

Richards, J. (2006). *Creating Choices. Rethinking Aboriginal Policy. Policy Study 43.* Ottawa: C. D. Howe Institute.

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. (1974). *Prejudice in Social Studies Textbooks: A Content Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Used in Saskatchewan Schools.* Saskatoon: Modern Press.

Schissel, B & Wotherspoon, T. (2003). *The Legacy of School for Aboriginal People: Education, Oppression, and Emancipation.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Sluman, N. (1966). "The textbook Indian." *The Toronto Education Quarterly*, 5(3), pp. 2-5.

Smith, C. F., McDevitt, D. J., & Scully, A. L. (1996). *Canada Today.* Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall.

Smith, G. H. (2000). "Protecting and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 209-224). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples.* New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Solomon, A. (1990). "Education." In M. Posluns (Ed.), *Songs for the People: Teaching on the Natural Way.* Toronto: NC Press.

Steinhauer, N. (1997). "The Education of Indians and Educating about Indians." In Ian Wright & Alan Sears (Eds.), *Trends and Issues in Canadian Social Studies* (pp. 250-258). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.

Surrey School District 36. (2007). "Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement – Draft" from http://fcweb.sd36.bc.ca/districtwebsites/AboriginalEducation.

Surrey School District 36. (2006a). "Aboriginal Programs in Surrey" from http://fcweb.sd36.bc.ca/districtwebsites/AboriginalEducation-Web/aeprograms.

Surrey School District 36. (2006b). "Secondary Schools" from http://www.sd36.bc.ca/directory/schooldetail.asp?type=&typw2=l&type3=t&snum=47.

Surrey School District 36. (2006c). "Secondary Schools" from http://www.sd36.bc.ca/directory/schooldetail.asp?type=&typw2=l&type3=t&snum=79.

Surrey School District 36. (2006d). "Secondary Schools" from http://www.sd36.bc.ca/directory/schooldetail.asp?type=&typw2=l&type3=t&snum=141.

Surrey School District 36. (2006e). "Twelfth Annual Report" from http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/DistrictReport/2006%20ISL%20Report.pdf.

Tomkins, G. S. (1986). *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum*. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall.

van Brummelen, H. (1986). "Shifting Perspectives: Early British Columbia Textbooks from 1872-1925." In Nancy Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, & David C. Jones (Eds.), *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History* (pp. 17-38). Calgary: Detselig.

van Hoven, B., Meijering, L., & Huigen, P. P. (2005). "Escaping Times and Places: An Artist Community in Germany." In G. J. Ashworth & Brian Graham Eds.), *Senses of Places: Senses of Time* (pp. 155-164). Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Vanderburgh, R. M. (1966). *The Canadian Indian in Ontario's School Texts: A Study of Social Studies Textbooks, Grades 1 Through 8.* Port Credit, ON: University Women's Club of Port Credit, Study Group on the Canadian Indian and Eskimo.

Walker, J. W. (1983). "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing, 1972-1982." In Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Eds.), *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows* (pp. 340-357). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Werner, W. (2002). "Reading Visual Texts." *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 30 (3), 401-428.

Werner, W. (2000). "Reading Authorship Into Texts." *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 28 (2), 193-219.

Werner, W., Connors, B., Aoki, T., & Dahlie, J. (1980). *Whose Culture? Whose Heritage? Ethnicity Within Canadian Social Studies Curricula.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Williams, L. B. & Wyatt, J. (1995). "Training Indian Teachers in a Community Setting: The Mount Currie *Lil'wat* Programme." In Jean Barman & Marie Battiste (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 10-227). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Wright, I. & Coombs, J. (1981). *The Cogency of Multicultural Education.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Yazzie, R. (2000). "Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Colonialism." In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 39-49). Vancouver: UBC Press.

APPENDIX

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services and Administration
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT	NUMBER
Marker, M.	Educational Studies	**B05-0434**

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

Surrey School District ,

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

Shiu, Daniel, Curriculum Studies

SPONSORING AGENCIES

TITLE :

How Are We Doing? Exploring Aboriginal Representation in Text and Aboriginal Programs in Surrey Secondary Schools

APPROVAL DATE	TERM (YEARS)	DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:
JUN 2 [illegible] 2005	1	May 24, 2003, Consent form

CERTIFICATION:

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:
Dr. James Frankish, Chair,
Dr. Cay Holbrook, Associate Chair,
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures