



Perspectives and Pedagogies for Aboriginal Education

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Pedagogy and Protocols of Place

A photograph of a winter landscape. In the center background, a large wooden teepee structure stands with its poles converging at the top. To the left, a bare, thin tree is in the foreground. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. Several large, dark rocks are scattered across the snow, some partially covered. A small, rounded mound of snow is visible near the base of the teepee. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Treaty Six Territories

My Work

- Seeks to raise consciousness and resist Eurocentric privileges, frameworks and norms
- Seeks decolonizing education that advances cognitive and cultural diversity
- Generates pedagogy of holistic knowledge and learning
- Recognizes distinctive Aboriginal learning processes and outcomes from place
- Reclaims Indigenous knowledge, voice and visions to restructure learning



My Courses

- ✓ Decolonizing Aboriginal Education (EIND. 851.3)
- ✓ Cross Cultural Research Methodologies (EIND. 855.3)
- ✓ Cross cultural and First Nations Education (Edft.335.3)
- ✓ Aboriginal Epistemology and Pedagogy (EIND. 450.3)

Eurocentrism

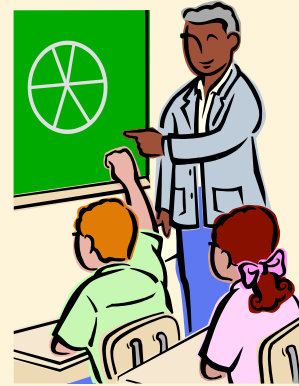
- A European 'centre' characterized by superiority, progress, hegemony, and monopoly over all other knowledge systems.
- Characterized as a singularity in notions of universal and diffused to the periphery.
- Dominant theory legitimized in science, educational and public institutions, publications/print, etc.

Cognitive Blocks created by Public Education

- Students rooted in Eurocentrism
- Attitudes of superiority and difference as deficiency in discourse
- White dominance and advantage normalized as status quo
- Insufficient exposure to FNMI (one 3 cu Native Studies Course required in education)
- Little knowledge or critical perspectives on their location



Cognitive Imperialism



- Built on imperialist knowledge and damaging assumptions
- Reflected in privileging of colonial languages, discourses, knowledge, practices, Euro-Anglo cultural origins, protocols
- Creates ‘othering’ and ‘different’
- Inflicts **soul wound** on Indigenous peoples and on the land

Decolonizing Awareness

- Every researcher/student has been a victim and beneficiary of the same educational system.
- Few persons are privileged with the knowledge of how to achieve a decolonized education.
- We all must become critical learners and healers within a wounded space.



Diverse characteristics of Aboriginal Peoples in Saskatchewan

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- 6 languages in Saskatchewan
- Over 75 FN reserves (population: <100 to >5000)
- Diverse langscapes/regions
- Diverse Experiences within Place: Rural/
urban/North, South/provincial public, FN Schs

Similarities in Experiences among Diversities

- Colonization
- Marginalization
- Powerlessness
- Exploitation
- Racism
- Violence
- Cultural Imperialism
- Place-based cultures
- Languages
- Worldviews
- Spiritual/Flux/
Animistic
- Relational
- IK
- Resilience



“We have the emotional drop-out from the institutions before the physical drop-out; we need to dismantle fears if we are to engage spirit; fulfill their needs, not ours, but our learners’ needs.” Ningwakwe George

“I have worked in literacy for fifteen years, and I know that almost 99.9 percent of learners that come into literacy programs have dealt with major trauma in their lives, and there are a lot of blocks.”

Nancy Cooper





Safety for talking about FNMI and social justice



Setting Ground Rules:

- Listen actively—respect others when they are talking
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing: “I” instead of “they”, “we,” and “you”
- Respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks—focus on ideas
- Participate to the fullest of your ability—community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
- The goal is not to agree—it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses—they can be as disrespectful as words (EdChange Awareness Activities)



Reading Reviews



- Students need to find their locations, voice and agency in their readings, writings, and discussion
- Each student is responsible for up to 4 readings, give a brief summary, and identify 4-5 quotes from which they are to comment from their experiences, linking ideas, other readings, teachings, 'ah-hah' moments, or moments of discord, etc.
- Questions given before reading help to identify key concepts.

Other Strategies

- Relational work is paramount to success
- Invite Elders and Aboriginal scholars to share their stories, research, experiences, guidance
- Learn protocols of place and diverse ways to engage local communities, organizations, Elders
- Students assignments connected to place: processes of deconstruction and rebuilding
- Talking circles, community engagements, group work
- Share conceptual and vocabulary discourses of academia in books, glossaries, reference works

Decolonization: Two-Prong Project

- Deconstruction:
Exposing political, moral and theoretical inadequacies of colonialism and culturalism in education.
- Reconstruction:
Transforming education and unleashing the potential of students in global diverse knowledge societies





Deconstruction

- Develop awareness and critique of Eurocentric, colonial bias and its racialized negative discourses and values and its effects on everyone
- Examine Constitution (Section 35 (1), laws (Indian Act), policies, history and differential treatment and resources of Aboriginal peoples
- Address intergenerational trauma, cognitive assimilation, loss of languages, IK, past and present negativities and traumas associated with the past, including lateral violence, internalized racism

Reconstruction



- Help students to see value and benefits from Indigenous knowledges in their lives and education: science, humanities, and visual arts, etc.
- Aim for theory and practice to heal present and past traumas
- Provide ways to reconstruct, reclaim, restore, renew Indigenous presence, identities, knowledges, and self-determination.

Inclusive Pedagogies



- Make explicit socialization in a racist culture and interconnectedness of oppressions related to race, class, gender, abilities, sexualities
- Accept heterogeneity and diversity as the norm.
- Rethink what distinctiveness and difference means when considering FNMI and how they are represented.
- Re-conceptualize 'mainstream' as changing and fluid place with many voices, experiences, and knowledge, not as status quo.



Aboriginal Rights and the Courts



Where there is an
Aboriginal right,
there is a
corresponding right
to teach that right.

(R. v. Côté, [1996] 3 S.C.R. 139)

Many Sources of Inspiration

- Canada's Constitution: Aboriginal treaty rights
- Canada's apology for Indian Residential Schools
- SSHRC Research in Aboriginal Programs
- Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Convention on the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination, etc.
- Activism and Voices of the Indigenous Renaissance

Authors on Indigenous Worldviews

- Gregory Cajete
- Richard Atleo
- Oscar Kawagley
- Kathy Absolon
- Karla Jessen Williamson
- Betty Bastien
- Leroy Littlebear
- Jo-ann Archibald
- J. Y. Henderson
- Herman Michell
- Willie Ermine
- Martin Nakata
- Tyson Yankaporta
- Shawn Wilson