“I’m too White to teach Native history”: Unpacking educator resistance to teaching

Aboriginal pedagogy

By

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Abstract

The Indigenous people of Canada are worthy of special focus as the original people of this continent. However, current research shows that there continues to be a persistent lack of integration of Indigenous content, perspectives and ways of knowing in schools. This paper presents original research findings on how teachers infuse Aboriginal history and culture into their curriculum, with a focus on why teachers may hesitate or entirely neglect to do so. For this study, I interviewed two high school and two elementary school teachers in institutions neighboring a Native reserve (N=4). Initial research focused on the ways in which teachers use culturally relevant pedagogy in order to engage Aboriginal students. However, primary data analysis showed that teachers were in fact not implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. I sought to uncover the root of this pattern and revisited and reworked my interview questions based on this discovery. I group these findings into four key categories: 1) the teachers’ lack of knowledge, 2) the “White Voice” and its implications on a multicultural audience, 3) a lack of support from colleagues or administration, and 4) a fragile relationship with the community. After contextualizing and unpacking each of these, I conclude by providing accessible strategies that teachers can implement in order to support more inclusive practice with regard to Aboriginal culture and history.
Acknowledgements

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# EDUCATOR RESISTANCE TO ABORIGINAL PEDAGOGY

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research Study

In both academic and social settings there is a resounding agreement that the educational system is not doing enough for Aboriginal students (Babbage, 2013). A recent Canadian study found that although three quarters of Aboriginal students live off-reserve and attend provincially-funded schools, only 30 percent of these Aboriginal students will graduate in comparison to the 73 per cent graduation rate of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Afolabi, Hove, & Richards, 2008, p.6). Research has also shown that implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom, pedagogy in which students see themselves and their history accurately reflected, is an extremely effective way to bridge the gap and motivate student success (Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, teachers interviewed for this study were reluctant to modify and enhance teaching practices. This research purposes to understand why this is so.

This issue continues to affect the quality of Canadian schooling today, as all educators, whether they have an Aboriginal population or not, are expected to teach their students about our First People’s history, language, and culture (Babbage, 2013). Nonetheless, it has become evident that while the final destination of Aboriginal academic success has been agreed upon, the road there has not been adequately paved, nor has proper transportation been supplied. While educators are held to a certain standard, many clearly require the additional training and resources needed to achieve this standard. In the two schools I have focused on for this research, as well as in various
studies included in the literature review, this has resulted in a palpable tension between teachers and students.

Thus, it is imperative that a conscious effort is made to delve deeply into the root of this pattern in order to fully understand the reasons behind these phenomena. This study aims to chart a clear plan of how best to support both our educators and our Native community to ensure a healthy relationship and student success.

**Purpose of the Study**

This qualitative research study focuses on educators who work directly with students of Aboriginal descent. The aim of the research is to uncover the various reasons teachers may be hesitant to use culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. Through this research we can better understand which practices can support them in this task in terms of teaching strategies and resources.

The importance of this subject emerged organically from a previous research project. My initial research focused on the ways in which teachers use culturally relevant pedagogy in order to engage Aboriginal students. However, preliminary data analysis showed that the participants in this study were not implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. I sought to uncover the root of this pattern. I revisited and reworked my interview questions based on this discovery.

Data from the initial research interviews with teachers uncovered four rather broad issues. The first was that the participants felt as though they lacked knowledge
concerning Aboriginal history and culture. Secondly, the theme of the “White Voice” emerged which questioned their own Caucasian culture and it’s implications on a multicultural audience. Third, they voiced a lack of support from colleagues or administration in terms of proposing new initiatives or supporting each other in Aboriginal-themed projects. And finally, participants felt as though the school’s relationship with the community was fragile. This research is intended to explore these issues further, as well as others that might emerge from more detailed responses on the topic.

It is only once we understand why teachers are not teaching Aboriginal pedagogy, especially in a school with a high Native population, that we can discuss how to change this. Qualitative rather than quantitative research was conducted in order to highlight the educators’ personal narratives, and to allow room to explore the complex relationship between their self and the community. This study not only focuses on the role of educators but also explores the variety of people involved in the teaching of Aboriginal education such as students, the school administration and the local community.

**Research Questions**

The principal objective of this research was to explore the overarching question: Why are many teachers not integrating culturally relevant pedagogy for their Aboriginal students; and how can we help teachers overcome these drawbacks and become comfortable using provided resources and strategies? My revised research and interview
questions can be grouped into four main categories that aim to explore these themes with more precision and focus.

The first question focuses on teachers’ general feelings toward teaching Aboriginal students and incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into and within their classrooms. Sub-questions for this theme aim to uncover whether this is based on factors such as teacher knowledge on the topic, familiarity with Native culture, or potential personal connections with the community.

The second question attempts to ascertain how a non-Native teacher approaches the aforementioned pedagogies and the potential impact the teachers’ race may have on their practice with regard to multiculturalism and a multicultural student population. The sub-questions explore how the students and community members have responded to their role as educators on this particular topic. Has there been any resistance in terms of school administration, families of the students, or colleagues?

The third inquiry considers the relationship between an educator and his or her colleagues, administration and community. Sub-questions explore what kind of work colleagues are doing and if there are group initiatives being undertaken; responses include specific examples of these instances. Sub-questions also explore initiatives such as field trips, guest speakers, and forming community clubs.

Solomon & Daniels (2009) examine the idea of a “deficit model” which focuses on what is lacking in terms of anti discriminatory education as opposed to what may exist
as possible resources. This fourth category shifts from a deficit model and attempts to focus on the potential for positive change. This question investigates what teachers believe would be the most effective support for them when teaching Aboriginal history or culture. Sub-questions probe changes to the curriculum, workshops, funding for relevant resources and materials, and further teacher-community collaboration.

**Background of the Researcher**

The topic of Aboriginal education is one that I have always found academically and personally fascinating, as it is especially relevant to my lived experiences. I grew up in Chateauguay, a town adjacent to the native reserve Kahnawake. My childhood memories are filled with my experiences on the reserve with my Mohawk friends. Because we lived in such proximity and participated in the same extracurricular activities, I sincerely felt that I was Mohawk until my parents assured me that I was in fact Italian.

The first time I realized that there was a difference between my friends and I was when I transferred schools in grade four. While the teachers did not openly acknowledge that particular students were Aboriginal, a division formed nonetheless. Whereas my friends could sit for hours listening to stories told by Elders, they seemed to have no patience for a lesson delivered by our teacher. I remember my Aboriginal friends saying that they didn’t like school; they often seemed disinterested and disengaged. Although we continued to be very close outside of school, I began sitting with other students in the class who were less distracting and would not get me into trouble for being off-task.
Many years later, I returned to both my Elementary and High School as a supply teacher and a volunteer. Sadly, I saw that the dynamic between the White teachers and Aboriginal students had not changed. There were still obvious tensions within the school as the Aboriginal students continued to be academically disengaged and unmotivated. I became very curious as to why this was so, and began speaking to educators about these patterns. After reading multiple articles about how to help our Aboriginal students, I became frustrated with the lack of questioning concerning the root of this problem. Why were these amazing educators avoiding such a seemingly obvious problem in their own classrooms? I wanted to answer these questions for academic purposes but also to understand more about myself through these teacher’s' personal experiences.

I focused on these two specific schools because as a teacher and a student, I have been on both sides of the educational experience. I feel a personal connection to this topic and I have a strong belief that positive change can happen with proper research, analysis, understanding and implementation.
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A History of Aboriginal Education in North America

The issues that we face today concerning Aboriginal education, are not recent developments, but are heavily entrenched in a history defined by disappointment and betrayal. Sheila Carr’s (2001) research entitled *A Treaty Right to Education* studies the agreements between the Crown and the First Nations people concerning their right to education, defined by the *Treaty Acts 1-7*, the *Constitution Act*, and the *Indian Act*. Carr explains how Canada’s actions have been divergent to the agreed upon constituents within these Acts, and how this has affected the Aboriginal community’s perception of the government funded education system. In order to expand upon this, I will be using the psychologically oriented text by Anisman, Bombay and Matheson written in 2011 to study the Residential School era and its lasting effects. The development of the relationship between Canada and its Indigenous population is very relevant to my research because in order to build upon my thesis, I must first create a historical foundation for my current research problem.

*The Constitution Act and Treaties 1-7*

In 1867 the *Constitutional Act* proclaimed that First Nations education was a federal responsibility and thus separate from provincial regulation. Between 1870 and 1877, Canada and the First Nations people agreed upon *Treaties 1-7*, which are all very similar in nature. However a comparison between Treaty 1 and Treaty 6 shows a slight, but very significant difference between the two. Treaty 1, written in 1871, states, “Her Majesty agrees to maintain a school on each reserve hereby made, whenever the Indians
of the reserve should desire it (Carr, 2001, p.4).” In contrast, an added provision in Treaty 6 says, “Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made as to her Government of her Dominion of Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it.” This alteration effectively removes the independence of First Nations people by placing the power of their educational rights in the hands of the government. Sadly, as we will see, this instance provides a foreshadowing of future education policies to come.

**The Indian Act**

The situation for First Nations people became direr when David Laird championed the *Indian Act* in 1876. This Act makes no mention of the previous treaties and their promises to build schools on the reserves. In fact, it makes no mention of Aboriginal education at all save to provide payment for a schoolteacher on the reserve, *if* they already had a fully functioning school. In 1894 an amendment was made to the *Indian Act* that enforced the mandatory attendance of Aboriginal children at school. Despite this amendment, as late as 1960 numerous reserves across Canada still did not have an educational establishment on their land. If there was indeed a school, they usually lacked finances and resources and were considered inferior to non-Aboriginal schools (Carr, 2001, p.8).

**Residential Schools**

Between 1863 and 1996, many Aboriginal youth were sent to Indian Residential Schools, with the aims of civilizing and assimilating them to Canadian culture. Due to the statutes of the *Indian Act*, all youth under sixteen were forced to attend school, and for
many, Indian Residential Schools (IRS) were the only option on their reservation. Sadly, numerous young Aboriginals suffered physical abuse, neglect and forced labor at the hands of the Residential Schools’ staff (Anisman, Bombay & Matheson, 2011). In fact, many believe that this was more than just an attempt at “education”- most notably including Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Macdonald and Hudson (2012), authors of *The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada* provide compelling reasons as to why removing over 100 000 aboriginal youth from their homes and sending them to these conditions is in fact an act of genocide.

Whether we consider the Indian Residential Schools to be genocide or solely a huge error on the part of the Canadian government, it has created lasting effects on our First Nations people, especially with regards to their perception of education. *The Impact of Stressors on Second Generation Indian Residential School Survivors* (2011) discusses how Indian Residential Schools have had repercussions far more serious than one could have imagined. The Canadian government, in terms of education, is now perceived by Aboriginal people as being unreliable and untrustworthy (Anisman, Bombay & Matheson, 2011, p. 375).

**What does Aboriginal education in Canada presently resemble? A comparison of British Columbia and Ontario**

**British Columbia**

The CD Howe Institute is a leading Canadian organization that conducts rigorous reviews of nationwide policies. In 2008, they published a significant study entitled *Understanding the Non Aboriginal/Aboriginal Gap in Student Performance*. This
resource analyzes a study that was performed in order to uncover why Indigenous students in British Columbia were performing at a lower level than non-Indigenous students. Unfortunately, British Columbia is the only Canadian province that collects and consistently publishes information in regards to Aboriginal student progress throughout their primary and secondary education. Thus I chose to include this text as it is taken from one of the most informative, objective and recent studies performed on this topic.

A Census conducted in 2006 found that for Aboriginals “the youngest for which it is reasonable to expect high-school completion is that aged 20 to 24 (Afolabi,Hove, & &Richards, 2008, p.1).” Moreover, they found that only 36 percent of men aged 20-24 on the reserve have obtained a high school diploma. This study uses statistics from The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) that classifies student performance in terms of three grades: “exceeding expectations,” “meeting expectations” and “not meeting expectations.” In the table below (Figure 1), the meet-exceed ratios (MERs) for three skills tests have been depicted: reading, writing and numeracy. The black columns represent the Non- Aboriginal “average meet- exceed ratio (MER)”, and the white columns depict the Aboriginal average MER. As illustrated by Figure 1, although the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is slowly closing, it is still ever present within our provincially funded schools.

Figure 1

Ontario (Toronto District School Board)

Aboriginal education in Ontario is accurately summated by a recent news report released in *The Canadian Press* titled “Ontario schools 'not doing enough' to provide Aboriginal education: Report” (Babbage, 2013). It states that although eighty two percent of Aboriginal students attend off-reserve schools, a study by The People for Education found that Ontario isn’t doing enough for these students as less than fifty percent of schools surveyed have Aboriginal education opportunities. The People for Education reports that funding has not kept pace with the rising number of Aboriginal students, and “The fact that eighty two per cent -- an estimated 64,000 -- of Ontario's aboriginal students attend provincially funded public schools has been ignored for far too long (Babbage, 2013).” There is a misconception that Aboriginal education need only be taught in classrooms where there is a visible Aboriginal community.

However, Aboriginal cultural and historical education is not limited to schools which have a high Aboriginal population but should be incorporated in all schools, at all
levels. Annie Kidder, the executive director of the program added that although they are not currently receiving it, all students “should have a really, really strong understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal perspectives, culture, history and relationships.” Sadly however, six years after declaring Aboriginal education a priority, Ontario’s auditor general found that there are no check ups being done on the state of Aboriginal education in the province (Babbage, 2013).

Moreover, the report *Decolonizing our schools: Aboriginal education in the Toronto District School Board* (Dion, Johnstone, & Rice, 2010) documents and analyzes the work of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP). Their research confirms that many institutions within the TDSB are failing to provide Aboriginal students with the educational environment they need in order to achieve success. They found that the four main barriers to Aboriginal education are:

A. A colonial legacy and it’s implications for students, families and communities

B. A lack of knowledge, understanding, and support on the part of the school staff

C. School Board policies that conflict with Aboriginal students’ needs

D. Curriculum expectations that create the impression that there is little for the integration of Aboriginal content (Dion, Johnstone, & Rice, 2010, p. 29).

For the purpose of this research I will be taking these four factors into account, while specifically focusing on the role that teachers play in Aboriginal education.

*White teachers, Native students: Unpacking the role of the teacher and race in the classroom*
The two schools studied in this research have a large Aboriginal population as students from the reserve make up about 30 percent of their student body. However, the majority of teachers employed there, including my research participants, are Caucasian and do not visibly identify with a racialized minority. This raises the question: Does a teacher’s background impact his or her practice with regard to multiculturalism and a multicultural student population? Solomon and Daniels (2009) research “Discourses on race and White privilege in the next generation of teachers” featured in the book The great white north? Exploring whiteness, privilege, and identity in education proves that teacher perceptions and practices around race play a pivotal role in how they approach related topics in the classroom.

The continual marginalization of Aboriginal students in government-funded schools may be a result of the dichotomy between the teacher and student demographic. “One explanation for the tacit willingness to discuss gender and race could be explained by the demographics of the Canadian teaching force. Canadian teachers continue to be overwhelmingly Caucasian, female, and of a middle social-economic class (p.167).” Many of these teachers do not have an accurate understanding of the historical contexts of prejudice and racism in Canada. Thusly they do not fully understand their role in these inequities and unknowingly perpetuate these inconsistencies to the next generation of students. Moreover, there is a distinct pattern of reluctance “to interrogate White privilege, tacit acceptance of White norms, physical and psychological distancing from the socially different, and the pretense of color-blindness (p. 163).” In fact some of my participants felt as though they should not do anything differently to appeal to their
Native population, as this would be treating them differently, and thus a step “backwards.”

This dichotomy has resulted in an “increase in the numbers of children who engage in varied forms of resistance to the school, increasing instability in the overall education system, an increase in the numbers of racialized youth being identified as ‘at-risk’ and an ever-widening gap between the reality of the students and the competing ideology of the teacher (p. 168).” Thus there remains the crucial need for educators to conduct honest self-interrogation and a thorough investigation of how their own biases and lived experiences affect their teaching. Only then, once these barriers have been broken, can we as educators transform social constructs.

Culturally relevant pedagogy: Strategies and methods

The Importance of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), an African American pedagogical theorist espouses the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in her research *But that’s just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy*. Culturally relevant pedagogy can best be described as a "humanizing pedagogy that respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice (p. 173).” Various synonyms for this term used in educational research include instruction that is "culturally appropriate," "culturally congruent," "culturally responsive," and "culturally compatible." Most importantly culturally relevant pedagogy is an effort to create a strong link between the student’s experiences at home and at school. Ladson-Billings asserts
that one of the reasons Indian children experience difficulty in schools is that educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into education, instead of inserting education into the culture (p.160).” How can educators prepare themselves to create a culturally responsive classroom setting in which Aboriginal students see themselves reflected?

**Strategies and Methods**

Aikenhead and Mitchell’s (2011) book *Bridging cultures: Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing nature* is written by educators for educators, in order to help incorporate Aboriginal learning into the class. I will focus mainly on “Chapter 8: General Advice for Teachers,” as it provides instructions and techniques that can realistically be implemented by my research participants. Aikenhead and Mitchell write that we first need to understand that teaching about culture and history is not only reserved for the history classroom, but that Indigenous curriculum can be incorporated into any classroom, such as Science or Math. “All teachers can be a catalyst for fostering 1) open-mindedness, 2) dialogue that respects multiple perspectives… regardless of a student’s cultural heritage all students will be enriched when they learn something about other people’s ways of knowing (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011, Chapter 8).”

Thus the first step to creating a culturally aware and critically engaged class is to ensure that teachers are familiar with the history, tradition and culture of the Indigenous people. Of course this can be done through the traditional route of reading a variety of literature on this topic. However, if possible, they should also strive to build a relationship with the local Native community. “A conscious connection to the students
communities will deepen their understanding of themselves, as well as ways in which Eurocentric sciences intersect with their communities (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, Chapter 8).” One could begin by establishing a personal, and respectful connection to an Elder in the Aboriginal community. This opens many possibilities for field studies, guest speakers, and engaging activities whether inside or outside the classroom.

The next step would be to adapt course content to incorporate themes or material which one would call their own personal “Indigenous Curriculum.” Firstly, educators should critically examine the material they have in their classroom for potential bias, and stereotyping. Moreover, they should make certain to use books, art, and music created by or about Indigenous people, perhaps referred to them by an Elder. “This culturally responsive action focuses classroom attention on students’ cultural backgrounds very effectively, helps augment students resiliency and ultimately causes significant improvement in their educational experience and success (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, Chapter 8).” Educators should also go beyond adapting their course content and integrate Indigenous-teaching techniques. For any student, it is important that you contextualize their learning by teaching with a holistic view. This means teaching about “the big picture” and this will help engage the Indigenous students. As the reading explains, teachers should encourage classroom discussion, incorporate visual material, and hands on learning whenever possible. Most importantly, they should always be open to student feedback and have open dialogue that aims to connect their lived experience with academic material.

This study explores the question of why White teachers are hesitant to teach
culturally relevant Aboriginal pedagogy. Through an in depth exploration of the themes within the literature, and connecting them to the current classroom experience, I hope to explain some of these issues.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Procedure

The main research themes were based on a variety of relationships: teacher relationship with the self, teacher and student relationship, teacher and teacher relationship, and finally the teacher’s relationship with the Aboriginal community. This topic deals with possible shortcomings on the part of teachers, and is an issue that some teachers may be uncomfortable talking about. Thus qualitative research was the ideal approach for this topic as it provided me the opportunity to build a rapport with my interviewees and the time to gain their trust in order to prompt candid and detailed responses. It also allowed me proximity to garner relevant personalized data, as well as allowing me to analyze my participant’s behavior and language in a natural setting.

Although my initial research did not glean the precise information I had intended to discover, it served to uncover a serious underlying issue in our school system. After I held my initial interviews and coded them, four main themes emerged. These themes served as both the foundation of my current research topic and helped guide my research questions.

I undertook my present research by first accessing relevant and reliable research on the general themes:

1) The history of Native American education and how this has impacted the current state of Aboriginal performance in our Canadian school system
2) White educators and the importance of implementing culturally relevant pedagogies in our schools

3) Progressive steps which have been taken in order to bridge the gap between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community and students in the form of resources and teaching strategies

**Instruments of Data Collection**

My interviews were conducted along the guidelines found in both *General Interview Guide Approach* and the *Standardized Open Ended Interviews* (Turner, 2010). There were two stages to this interview process because the topic was altered as a result of the first interview, and thus a second interview had to be undertaken with these same educators. However both interviews were held in a similar manner.

Prior to both interviews, candidates received an email consisting of the interview questions twenty-four hours beforehand. They were given the opportunity to look them over if they desired, or to arrive at the interview and hear the questions for the first time. This allowed participants time to ponder the questions and find rich and meaningful personal and professional experiences upon which to draw. I decided on this partly because a participant requested it and I wanted each teacher to have the same accessibility to the information.

The interviews were held in the teachers’ classrooms at their school after the school day had finished. I used garage band to record my interviews, and also jotted down a few notes on pad and paper throughout. The two stages of interviews lasted
between 35-50 minutes each, with a slight variance between educators. The interviews were held with an informal and relaxed approach, which allowed me small opportunities to personalize the interviews. The interviews were semi structured because although the main interview questions were posed identically, some participants received further prompting or feedback according to their answers.

I began the first stage of interviews by giving my participants a brief introduction to the research topic, and thanking them for agreeing to participate. I then asked them a few questions that pertained to their teaching background in order to gain a better understanding of the interviewee. A sample question for this section would be: “What is your teaching philosophy?” The next portion was more specific and focused on teacher methods and strategies of accommodating and motivating Aboriginal students in the classroom. For instance: “Do you feel as though having a larger Aboriginal population in your class has altered the resources you use in the classroom? Can you give me an example of this?” Finally I asked questions concerning the work being done by the school administration on this issue.

After I finished the data analysis I contacted my participants and informed them of the change in research focus and asked whether they were still interested in participating in the study. All participants agreed to pursue the research. Thus for my second interviews I examined the themes that had emerged from the previous interviews and opened the space for more detailed dialogue. The first section of questions investigates the teacher’s personal feelings about teaching culturally relevant pedagogy. The second talks about the status of their relationships with the various persons involved
in the education. An example of this question would be: “What sort of support does the school administration provide and have these been adequate?” And third inquires about the possibility of positive change with questions like: “What do you think would be the biggest help for you when teaching Aboriginal history or culture?”

**Participants**

Recruiting my participants was rather simple as I attended both of the schools which my participants are employed by. Although many of the teachers had changed over this time, my sister is currently teaching at the elementary school and put me in contact with her colleague Melanie, who is a young and dynamic educator. Melanie had recently won the Native grant and I felt as though she would be a good candidate for the research, as I was looking for innovative educators who have an interest in Aboriginal education.

After interviewing Melanie she informed me that there were other teachers she knew who might also be interested in being a part of this research. She put me in contact with her colleagues Lisa and Susan who teach at the local High School. I emailed both of these teachers and explained to them my thesis and main research questions. They agreed to participate in the research study.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

After I had transcribed all of my interviews my first step as a researcher was to conduct a broad analysis of my transcript. I did so by reading my transcript a few times and then changing the font color of my speech in order to focus on the interviewee’s
responses. I decided that I would use Descriptive Coding filter as I think this was the most applicable to my topic and research style. Although I used the In Vivo method in order to find key words, I preferred a broader idea based coding to find the themes. I then began the three stages of data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Wellington, 2000). For the data reduction stage I bolded the key words and ideas which recurred more than once throughout the text. Once I had found the patterns, I began the second cycle which focused on grouping these codes. I drew links between them and tried to decide which broader theme they could fit into.

After I had completed data reduction I created an index chart which highlighted my prior and emergent themes (Faulk & Blumenreich, 2005). Data display served to provide a visual representation for codes or themes as they are assembled and categorized in a graph. This provided a quick reference for a crucial component to the research, the Reflective Analysis.

**Ethical Review Procedures**

Each participant was given a consent form prior to each interview in accordance with the Ethical Review Procedures of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, at the University of Toronto. The consent form was reviewed with the participant before the first interview to ensure that the topic of the research study was clear to them. Any additional questions and concerns about the research process were thoroughly answered. Participants were reassured of their anonymity through the use of pseudonyms and alterations of the school name and projects. After this the interviewees were asked to read and sign the consent form (located in Appendix B). Moreover, I made it very clear that
their participation in this research was completely voluntary. Thus they had the right to choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time throughout the study.

In terms of interview times, I was flexible and did my best to accommodate my interviewees’ schedules. The interview transcripts were kept on my password protected computer so that the public could not access them. These transcripts were kept private and I did not share the transcriptions with someone other than my supervisor. In addition I backed up my files on a USB key in case something ever occurred to my computer files. The interviewees were offered access to the completed transcripts and were encouraged to provide feedback or voice any concerns they had with the draft of the study. Finally each participant will receive a copy of the Master’s of Teaching Research Paper in its final form.

Limitations

Because of the limited number of participants, I believe that my research will not accurately represent the multitude of experiences and opinions of other educators of Aboriginal students. Furthermore, my participants were chosen from a specific town, and thus a certain social climate that further limits its generalizability to other educators’ experiences. However, because this research is qualitative, I will be able to gain very personal and deep insights on this topic.
Chapter 4: FINDINGS

Meeting the participants

The following portion serves as a brief introduction to my three research participants for this study. An in depth description of the recruitment and interview process is detailed in Chapter 3. Due to the participant’s right to privacy all names have been changed, and pseudonyms are used throughout the research.

Lisa

My first participant Lisa is a White, female educator who has taught at the Elementary level for nine years. Her educational philosophy focuses on teaching the child, rather than the subject, through understanding what their needs are. She is currently completing her Master’s degree in Education part time and is impassioned by research and academia. Lisa was motivated to participate in this research as it is significant and pertinent to her lived experience as a teacher of Aboriginal youth and because the findings would be relevant to her own classroom.

Melanie

Melanie has been an Elementary teacher for three years. She is a White female. Her formative years of growth and experience were spent living in a town adjacent to a reserve in Quebec and has had first-hand experience with the Mohawk population both within her personal and professional life. Her teaching philosophy explores alternative forms of teaching and targets distinct learning styles. Melanie has recently won two Native grants that are awarded every year to a teacher who has shown the desire to
support Aboriginal learning. She is anticipating the utilizations of these resources in a meaningful way. Her interest in this study was motivated by her desire to make a difference: “Having worked at this school for three years now I have realized that we don’t do enough in our classrooms to help our Native students… I feel my teaching is very one sided, I want to help find ways to change this.”

Susan

Susan, my third participant is a White, female educator who has been teaching at the High School level for eight years. The cornerstone of her teaching philosophy is that it is necessary to adapt the school curriculum to meet the diverse and distinct needs of the students she teaches. She works within an institution that offers academic support to Aboriginal students. Susan agreed to be part of this research as she felt that her experiences and intimate knowledge of the challenges that face many educators in this field would be pertinent and a positive contribution to the task at hand: “When it comes to education, I feel that all information, practices, and techniques should be shared freely.”
THEMES FOUND IN RESEARCH

There are six main themes with several sub-themes that emerged as a result from the findings obtained:

Theme 1: The educator’s lack of knowledge on Aboriginal history and culture
  - Personal
  - Professional

Theme 2: Weak relationships between school faculty and the Aboriginal community
  - Schools’ relationship with the Aboriginal community
  - Teachers’ relationship with parents

Theme 3: The effect of a White educator teaching Aboriginal students
  - White voice
  - Relationships with students
  - Tensions in the classroom

Theme 4: Lack of support from school faculty
  - Teacher and administrative support
  - Funding

Theme 5: The importance of culturally relevant pedagogy

Theme 6: Positive strategies
THEME 1: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Personal

Initial data analysis found that the largest contributor as to why participants did not implement a culturally relevant pedagogy was because many of them lacked adequate knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history. When asked to rate their knowledge on a scale from one to five, the participants’ answers were a one, a two, and three. Lisa, who gave herself a two explains: “I’d like to think I know more than I realize, but there’s so much to know. It’s such a rich culture, history, and sadly many of them are very guarded about their customs. Information is hard to come by and what I know is superficial.” Susan, and Melanie answered similarly voicing a poignant embarrassment in their lack of knowledge, while expressing their desire to learn more.

Professional

When participants were asked whether they had attended any courses or workshops on Aboriginal education, all answered “no.” One even confessed “not at all.” This indicated a multi-faceted problem. Primarily, that Aboriginal education and culturally relevant pedagogy is not adequately being taught at the university level. Furthermore, if Aboriginal education is not being prioritized at the higher level, this can lead to a bigger problem in our school system. School administrators may in turn not prioritize Aboriginal education, and this will affect the financial and personal support offered for their staff to attend Aboriginal workshops or seminars. Finally, this may help
explain why teachers are not personally motivated to learn more about their student population and how to engage them in a meaningful way.

**THEME 2: RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY**

Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly discussed the state of the relationship between their school and the Aboriginal community. Both Melanie and Lisa voiced that the school had little to no relationship with the Mohawk community. All three agreed that there were many underlying tensions present in the current relationships.

Lisa, who teaches at the Elementary school found that

Individuals are really guarded. The community seems to be divided between those who guard their traditions, and educate their kids in their community, and those that want their kids to get a bilingual education… Those parents we have a good relationship with. I mean, there’s a lot of history- I can understand the friction.

All participants spoke of personal attempts at building a stronger connection with the Aboriginal community and the students, however these efforts were being met with little to no interest.

Susan, who has been working with the Aboriginal program at the High school level said

I have worked with the Native Education Support Team (Aboriginal students) for the past 3 years, off and on and I have learned a lot about the culture. However it is still a small and closed community that appreciates their privacy and it is hard to submerge completely into the culture. I have learned to give them space.

*Relationship with parents*
All participants felt as though the schools relationship with the Aboriginal students’ parents was weaker than with the non-Aboriginal students’ parents. They were clear that this differed greatly on a case-by-case basis, but that generally parents seemed much less invested in creating a positive relationship with their child’s teacher.

Melanie explains her personal experience with Aboriginal parents as being very positive but that they sadly did not see school as being a priority in their child’s life:

The parents are for the most part really friendly. It’s just that they don’t seem to care about their child’s academic or school performance. They’re often late, or leave early, or miss school altogether. It’s like… if the parents don’t care about school then why should the kids?

Lisa told the anecdote of an encounter with a grade two student’s parent from the reserve. Lisa found the relationship between herself and the student’s mom was very tense on the basis that Lisa was a White teacher at a government-funded school.

The student had arrived with an immense knowledge of the residential schools and what had happened to Native students there. I thought it was a bit early for him to know all of that but it was her business if she wanted to teach him. This same parent ended up pulling her child out of our school and sending him to the school on the reserve. She said that we “weren’t meeting her child’s needs.” I tried my best to figure out what that meant and contact her… it was really too bad.

I asked the participants whether they thought their relationship with the Aboriginal parents would be different if they were Aboriginal educators as opposed to White. All participants agreed that this would make a positive difference in their relationships. Lisa replied that things would be much easier as parents would be willing to make stronger links with the school if they felt more connected to their child’s educator on a person to person level.
Because many of the parents don’t fully trust our school system due to the history of lies and assimilation, they are less willing to make connections with the “authority.” If I were Aboriginal then I would have a lot of shared personal experiences with the parents and I would be less intimidating than an “outsider.”

THEME 3: WHITE TEACHER, ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

White Voice

Participants spoke of the challenges they had encountered as a White teacher in a classroom with a high Aboriginal population. When asked how they felt about teaching Aboriginal education as a non-Native the most commonly used words were: intimidated, nervous, and tense. More specifically they spoke of how they feared the Aboriginal content they taught might be scrutinized or judged more harshly because it was coming from an “outsider.”

Melanie elaborates:

I don’t know very much and don’t want to somehow insult them…what if I tell them things they already know? Because there have been so many inaccuracies in our textbooks, and complete lies told by us, I feel as though the Aboriginal students resent me teaching them about their own culture. They can be pretty tough on you.

Susan spoke of some student resistance when teaching about the history between the European settlers and Aboriginals.

Especially in my first year teaching Canadian history I had Aboriginal students take a general disinterest in History, because it was "stupid" or "boring" or didn't teach us the "truth". It was hard for me to find a way to engage them.
Relationships with students

Although participants felt they had fostered good relationships with their Aboriginal students, two agreed that it had taken some time. Lisa gave this short anecdote of her relationship with a grade two student as an example:

I had built a really great connection with one of my Mohawk students and we got along very well. One day she excitedly asked me if I was Mohawk as well, and she seemed so disappointed when I said that I wasn’t. I could see that she looked at me a bit differently after that but I tried to make her see it as an opportunity to make connections with someone she wouldn’t necessarily have thought she had things in common with.

Tensions in the classroom

Having a student population from diverse backgrounds can make it difficult for educators to balance the amount of instruction that is culturally relevant and geared towards the Aboriginal students. Lisa explains her uncertainty about how to juggle these two realities:

I ask myself how do we bridge the divide, how do we connect? And I feel like whatever we do we are walking a fine line because if we emphasized the distinction and the difference, do we then create a greater rift between us? And if we tilt too much in the opposite direction are we just looking at full on assimilation again? I just don’t know what the best answer is to create a strong link between the two cultures.

Susan spoke of tense moments sometimes emerging in her History class between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. One way that she has dealt with these situations is by having the Aboriginal students informally teach their peers using their own previous experience.

Mind you, there have been moments where the information that was presented has come out harshly from either the native student "informing" or the non-native student "questioning". I have been quick to jump in to ease the
question/explanation and offer back-up/support in where the question/expression was coming from.

Melanie, who makes a genuine and consistent effort to incorporate a variety of Aboriginal traditions and history into her classroom’s curriculum, found that this could be potentially isolating to the non-Aboriginal students in the class. In fact, she was shocked when two non-Aboriginal students walked out of the classroom one day because they were “tired about hearing about Native people.”

Susan adds that there are benefits to having tensions aired openly in the classroom, because only once they are addressed can they be improved.

I know the native kids that I teach are quick to say that they get annoyed when people assume they still live in teepees. They think it is kind of comical too, at the same time. This year, I have been a little more open with the kids that I teach and point out the fact that, it isn't so much that people are being ignorant and rude on purpose, but it is what has been projected on film and TV. It is easy to get angry and lash out, but they can all take it as a learning experience and teach and inform someone to know better.

THEME 4: LACK OF SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL FACULTY

The participants of this study unanimously expressed they would be in a better position to engage their Aboriginal students if they were supported by their school’s faculty and administration.

Teacher support

Melanie, the participant who won two Native grants, is excited to put the money she has been given into creating culturally relevant activities for students, and acquiring
resources to further educate her students on Aboriginal history and culture. However, she describes her initiatives to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy as being isolating. Her colleagues do not seem interested in the work she is doing:

> It’s a lonely thing to try and teach because you know other teachers in the school probably aren’t doing it for their students. Most teachers brush the topic aside because we aren’t really equipped to deal with this topic effectively. The older teachers seem less interested, and a bit apprehensive…No one wants extra burden on top of what they already have.

Susan also spoke of the inconsistency of the support provided by her colleagues

> I do not believe that the school support is geared toward the whole staff, but I know that the Native Resource teacher has received some guidance and learned approaches in how to deal with Native kids. I have gotten some support through this teacher, but this has been inconsistent as the teacher has been off on preventative leaves and pregnancies, 6 years in a row.

**Funding**

Although participants want to foster better links with the community they found that they needed more funding and resources. Both of the schools being studied receive money from the government due to their large Aboriginal population, but participants believe these resources have proven to be misappropriated.

For example, there is funding at the High School but it is concentrated towards the few teachers who work with the special Aboriginal program, and not to the mainstream classroom teachers. Susan explains:

> Unfortunately the money that is received is only enough to pay for the teachers working within the program. However every other teacher has a high population of Aboriginal students in their classroom as well who could benefit from the resources. We are a public school in the English system, here in Quebec...there is no extra money really for anything.
In terms of the Elementary school both Lisa and Melanie spoke highly of the contrast between the previous Principal who prioritized Aboriginal learning and was very supportive of teacher initiatives on this issue, and the new Principal. The new Principal’s differing areas of interest have caused a remarkable shift in the focus of the Aboriginal population towards other programs.

Lisa explained:

Current administration gives nothing. Even the money we receive is an ongoing thing so it just gets renewed every year, we don’t do anything over and beyond this for our students. We get the bare minimum because we do the minimum.

Melanie who teaches with Lisa at the Elementary school supports this statement:

Resources are inadequate and although our staff is positive they won’t go out of their way to fight for more. We receive a Native grant but this doesn’t even go to our Aboriginal learners, it goes to hiring two extra teachers so there are smaller classrooms. When I applied for the two Native grants, I was shocked at how easily I received them. They even asked me to contact them if I needed anything else. But I had to go out of my way to find these grants, the school administrators didn’t even know about them!

THEME 5: CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

When discussing ways in which to engage Aboriginal students all participants mentioned the importance of instructing using a culturally relevant pedagogy. Although participants agreed that culturally relevant pedagogy was important, they didn’t necessarily understand how to implement it in their classrooms. They acknowledged that this was a problem, yet seemed to expect outside help to fix it.
Melanie found that the schools attempt at cultural inclusiveness was not adequate and that there was a lot of room for improvement.

Why would you want to learn in a place where you don’t feel like you fit in? I think it’s crazy that we have a Black history month and we don’t even have an Aboriginal day at our school… And it’s just so frustrating because until I received these grants I hadn’t even thought about how maybe my Aboriginal students’ needs might vary from my other students.

In fact, only one of the participants said that she used different resources in order to engage her Aboriginal students. While Susan admits that she would like to do more, she attempts to implement a culturally relevant pedagogy in her classroom in simple ways:

In my first year of teaching Canadian history I was quick to realize that if I wanted to keep the kids engaged, I would have to provide little anecdotes to help understand the time period or event. I also realized that if I wanted to keep the Aboriginal students engaged I would have to be aware of the history behind their feelings against colonialism and the progress (or lack of) with the government.

**THEME 6: POSITIVE STRATEGIES**

The last theme deviated from the deficit – model approach and focused more on positive strategies that participants employed in the classroom and how they felt they would be best supported as educators. Despite the fact that participants were not satisfied with the strategies they employed to help their Aboriginal students learn, it is important to note their efforts to do so nonetheless.
For example, Susan tries to honor her Aboriginal students lived experience by having them share this knowledge informally with their peers:

This year in particular, I feel that I have a number of mature, knowledgeable, and well-spoken Aboriginal students who want to inform those misinformed. They do not do it out of anger and hatred. They are keen and eager to share their information. It is exciting to listen to.

Melanie added that since she has won the Native grant she has found a renewed sense of purpose and now makes a conscious effort to include multicultural resources in her lessons.

I am now hyper aware that a lot of the artists that we studied in class were all the classics, White Western men. I try now to infuse some Native music- well not only Native but also African and South American. I also really want to hold an Aboriginal Week at our school next year that will focus on Native artists, and important historical figures. I think this would be a great step in the right direction for us.

When asked what the biggest resource would be when teaching Aboriginal students or culture Lisa said creating partnerships with the local community and “bringing the outside in.” Melanie felt as though having more culturally relevant resources available and easily accessible to all teachers and classes would be a paramount and impactful change. Most importantly, all participants agreed that having more knowledge on the subject would be the most significant resource for them.
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to share my reflections on this research study gathered from both the literature review and interviews conducted. The research findings will be summarized as well as the implications they have on the teaching profession. I provide simple and effective strategies that educators can implement to better incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy in their classrooms. With the solutions provided I hope to allow teachers to create a more multicultural learning environment for all students. I conclude by discussing any final thoughts and questions this research has raised.

Personal Reflection

This study has enhanced my understanding of my own racial identity through a reconsideration of my childhood experiences. I recognize that my own identity plays a significant role in the content I choose to teach to my students, and how I choose to do so. I understand that growing up in a town that was predominantly made up of immigrant families and Aboriginal people has affected me as an educator. The lens through which I look at education and multiculturalism will be very different from those of my fellow colleagues and students. I have a bias, unintentional though it may be, and I need to constantly reevaluate and question how my experiences may possibly affect my student’s learning (Solomon & Daniels, 2009, p.167).

I have learned the importance of venturing out of our comfort zone as teachers as I have found that continual growth requires feeling uncomfortable. My research
participants hesitated to teach more contentious topics and issues because they were intimidated by them. Educators fear when their students are more knowledgeable than they as it seems to shift the power dynamic. This creates a classroom in which the teacher is no longer the keeper of knowledge but the facilitator of difficult and sometimes heated discussions. Though this is also an intimidating concept for me, research has shown me the value in openly addressing issues in the classroom. I want to create a safe, and inclusive classroom space where everyone’s voice can be heard. Where my students and I learn from each other. This research has been an eye opening experience for me and I am very appreciative of my participants for being honest open, and facilitating this personal and educational exploration.

**Implications**

The implications of this study highlight the importance of fostering understanding between our educators and our Aboriginal communities. The research proves that the cultural tension is still present in the relationship between the Aboriginal community and the educators in government-funded schools. Teachers need to understand the complex history behind the current reality (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011, pp. 133). They should be open and proactive in order to create positive change to this situation.

Furthermore, the greatest contributor to White teachers not implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy for their Aboriginal students’ is due to lack of knowledge, and this has enormous implications and repercussions: Funding, which is the main resource being supplied by Band Council grants and our government, is not necessarily an effective proponent of Aboriginal pedagogy. What we should in fact be prioritizing is
our Teacher Candidate’s Aboriginal education at the university level. Teachers feel unprepared to educate Aboriginal students as they have not been provided with the adequate education themselves. Providing Teacher Candidates with course selections that are specifically targeted to teaching Aboriginal pedagogy, history, and culture could rectify this.

These emergent issues cannot simply be remedied by providing teachers with additional funding or resources. These teachers need education, guidance, and support (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011, pp. 140). If these needs are met several positive effects on our education system will occur:

- Minimization of the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students academic success
- Greater cultural sensitivity towards Aboriginal people for both teachers and students
- More inclusive and multicultural classroom environments.

**Recommendations**

**Theme 1: Lack of knowledge**

- Increase the amount of Teacher Candidate instruction on Aboriginal culture at the University level
- Encourage educators to attend workshops or seminars through subsidization

**Theme 2: Relationship with community**

- Provide Aboriginal students with a role model in which they see themselves better reflected by hiring Aboriginal staff
- Create school programs or initiatives that welcome Aboriginal community members into the school in an educational capacity
- Foster connections between Native Schools and our government funded schools by encouraging collaboration between the two schools e.g. exchanging emails, or class blogs with each other
Theme 3: White teacher, Aboriginal students

- Encourage all students to share and incorporate their culture and lived experiences into their learning in a safe environment
- Preemptively address issues or vocabulary that may arise in a multicultural classroom e.g. Appropriate versus inappropriate terms for Aboriginal people

Theme 4: Lack of support from school faculty

- Foster a better relationship between teaching faculty and administration in order to facilitate communication and sharing of ideas or initiatives

Theme 5: Culturally relevant pedagogy

- Provide better publicity and accessibility concerning available bursaries and grants for both teachers and students

Limitations

Due to the limited number of participants, I believe that my research will not accurately represent the multitude of experiences and opinions of other educators. Furthermore, my participants were chosen from a specific town that borders a Native reserve and this specificity further limits its generalizability. For example the school’s relationship with the local Aboriginal community was weak, however this may vary greatly depending on community. Finally, all of my research participants were White females, and the data would most likely vary had I interviewed participants of a different gender or background.

Further study

It would be fascinating for future study to interview Teacher Candidates and ask them whether they feel their teaching program has adequately prepared them to educate
Aboriginal students. What are their attitudes towards teaching Aboriginal pedagogy and how could we best support them in order to prepare them? How do Teacher Candidate programs address the issue of culturally relevant pedagogy in general?

For further research it would be valid to look at what culturally relevant Aboriginal pedagogy looks like when implemented in a classroom. It would be beneficial to study the other side of the coin, teachers who are teaching Aboriginal students and seeing positive results. I would like to look at a model classroom in order to compile what these teachers are doing and then implement these strategies in a mainstream classroom.

**Conclusion**

My current research has come a long way from its original focus on Aboriginal student engagement. I found that all data, no matter how it deviates from the original topic, was useful and insightful. Thankfully, what emerged from my data analysis was a topic I feel is more prevalent and significant to my educational experience and the education system. As a researcher I was able to ask the bigger question: Why are teachers not currently teaching culturally relevant pedagogies for the Aboriginal students? Uncovering the “why” behind this phenomenon proved to be something more multilayered and complex than previously imagined. I look forward to continuing my research on the role of the teacher’s race and cultural knowledge, and how this affects their relationship to the Aboriginal community.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ______________

Dear ______________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying _________________ for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr. _________________. My research supervisor is _________________. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 40 minute interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: ______________________________

Phone number, email: ______________________________
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by ______________________ (name of researcher) and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: __________________________________________

Name (printed): ____________________________________

Date: ______________________________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Session 1: This interview was conducted in order to find data on previous research topic

Background information of interviewee

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. What is your teaching philosophy?
3. Why are you interested in being a part of this research?

Interviewee’s understanding of the topic and/or context

4. How would you describe the level of Aboriginal student engagement in your class, in comparison to non-Aboriginal students?
5. Have you attended any courses or sessions on aboriginal education?
6. How would you rate your knowledge of Native American culture on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), and why?

Teaching Strategies and Methods

7a) Do you feel as though having a larger Aboriginal population in your class has altered your teaching techniques?
b) Can you give me an example of this?
8a) Do you feel as though having a larger Aboriginal population in your class has altered the resources you use in the classroom?

b) Can you give me an example of this?

9. Have you created any links with the Aboriginal community outside your classroom?

b) Can you give me an example of this?

10. Do you know of other teachers who are doing something to incorporate Aboriginal culture into their classroom?

Challenges and Benefits

11. What are some of the challenges you have faced in having responsibility for a classroom that includes both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students?

12. What are some of the benefits you have experienced teaching Aboriginal students?

Support From School Administration

13. Does the school organize teacher development sessions where teachers can learn new strategies or methods on how to improve Aboriginal education?

14. What kind of funding (in the form of teacher’s aids, field trips, resources) does the school provide?
Interview Session 2: This interview was conducted based on emergent themes from the first interview

1. How do you feel about teaching Aboriginal education as a non-Native?

2. Are there any reasons why you have been, or currently are hesitant to teach Aboriginal history, pedagogy, and culture?

3. Are there any reasons why you have been, or currently are hesitant to teach Aboriginal students?

4. What do you think would be the biggest help for you when teaching Aboriginal history or culture?

5. Do you feel as though your colleagues are supportive of you when you incorporate Aboriginal history or culture? If so can you provide specific examples?

6. What sort of support does the school administration provide and have these been adequate?

7. Can you describe the relationship between your school and the Khanawake community?