

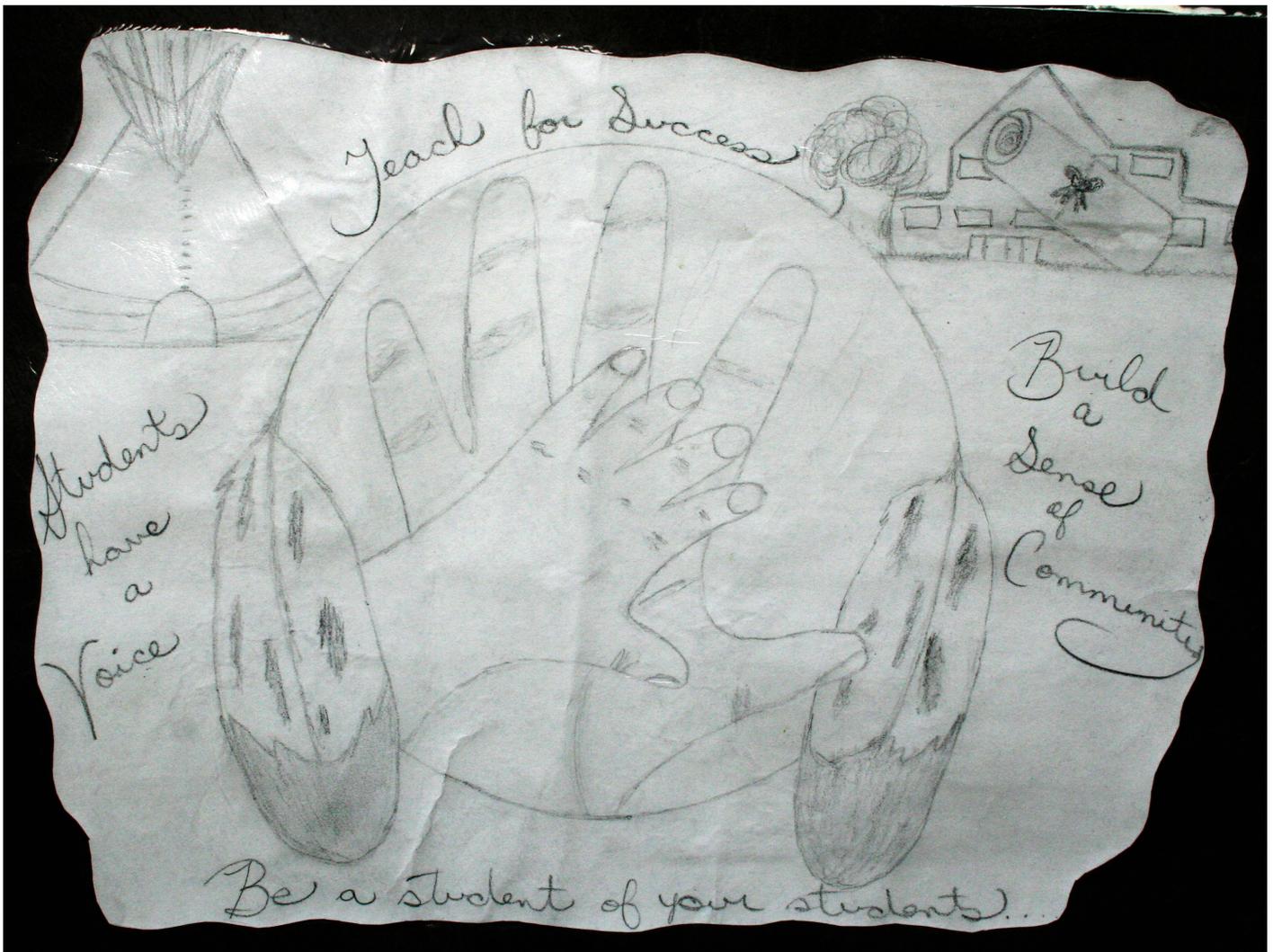
# ONE WORLD in Dialogue



Volume 2  
Number 1  
2012



SOCIAL STUDIES COUNCIL of the ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



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Cover: The drawing on the cover was created by Natasha Calf Robe Ayoungman, an elementary teacher at Chief Old Son School, Siksika.

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From the Editor	2	<i>Gail Jardine</i>
Introducing the Reviewers	5	
<b>Articles</b>		
Trying to Make the Mission Statements of Social Studies Curriculum Inhabit My Social Studies Pedagogy and Vice Versa	8	<i>David Scott and Laurence Abbott</i>
Alberta Heritage Fairs—A Secret That Needs to Be Shared	19	<i>Belinda Crowson</i>
Invoking Accountability and Documentation Through “All My Relations”	21	<i>Vicki Bouvier</i>
An Invitation to Explore the Roots of Current Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Relations in Canada	25	<i>Gail Jardine</i>
Love Thy Neighbour: Repatriating Precarious Blackfoot Sites	38	<i>Cynthia Chambers and Narcisse Blood</i>
Book Review: <i>Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum</i> , by Yatta Kanu	54	<i>Rick Hesch</i>
Call for Papers	57	
Guidelines for Manuscripts	58	

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# From the Editor

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*Gail Jardine*



Social studies is interdisciplinary. We regularly teach multiple strands and perspectives during each topic, and this issue of *One World in Dialogue* reflects that. There are articles on the Italian Renaissance, heritage fairs and Aboriginal perspectives. Because of this emphasis, I am glad that Natasha Calf

Robe Ayoungman, an elementary teacher at Chief Old Son School, Siksika, and a member of the Siksika Nation, agreed to include her drawing on the front cover. Calf Robe Ayoungman drew this when she was a student teacher in response to her teacher's invitation to draw what was at the heart of teaching and learning for her. Thank you, Nat!

The extent to which the Alberta Program of Studies encourages social studies teachers and students to explore multiple perspectives as part of reaching active responsible citizenship is fascinating, fulfilling and important. We social studies teachers strive to help students achieve deep, meaningful learning; respect; fairness; inclusivity and "engaged, active, informed and responsible" citizenship (Alberta Education 2005, 1). The contributors to this issue are engaged, in one way or another, in exploring how to teach students what it means to live well on earth as human beings in relation to other humans, in the past,

in the present and with consideration for the well-being of life on earth in the future. In this issue, K–12 and postsecondary teachers explore how to learn to do this in deep, informed and authentic ways.

David Scott and Laurence Abbott, two graduate students who are also teachers, present a review of research literature on how to teach to promote engaged citizenship and a sense of transformative agency in students. Scott and Abbott consider the power of critical questions (Case 2005), essential questions (Wiggins and McTighe 2005), portals of historical understanding (Denos 2008; Seixas 2006), curriculum wisdom (den Heyer 2011) and throughline questions (ALPS 2001). Then, in a section entitled Theory Meets Practice, Scott and Abbott describe in rich detail a classroom project that focused on meaningful questions from the Program of Studies. They designed an inquiry unit for the Grade 8 topic, Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe. The authors explain:

The inquiry question that was chosen for this topic was: Does Calgary possess the necessary conditions to become a renaissance city? Rather than framing a question that asks students to understand how our modern western worldview emerged from the Renaissance, the lead author imagined the unit as a way to use developments and changes during the Renaissance as a lens through which to view the present. Ultimately, it was hoped that this engagement would help students better understand their current historical conditions in their world today and open up the possibility that things could be otherwise.

As they describe the teaching and learning that went on during this project, the authors also incorporate and evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches to meaningful questioning that were introduced in their literature review.

Of course, learning about the past events to understand the present and to contribute to a better future permeates social studies teaching and learning. Belinda Crowson, a former teacher and now the museum educator at the Galt Museum and Archives, in Lethbridge, and coordinator of the Southern Alberta Regional Heritage Fair, updates us on the renaissance of heritage fairs in Alberta. As a judge at earlier Calgary heritage fairs, I was struck by how motivated the students were in their research and presentations. They chose the topics themselves, conversed with community experts, engaged in interdisciplinary research and used multimedia presentations to share what they had learned. Belinda writes, "Let's see if next year we can ensure that every teacher across the province is talking about this wonderful opportunity." Being a judge is a wonderful opportunity to network for a morning with a wide range of professionals interested in history from your own community. Heritage fairs are learning communities.

The next four papers centre on Aboriginal perspectives in one way or another. Vicki Bouvier is the coordinator of the Aboriginal Youth Outreach Program at the Native Centre, University of Calgary, and a graduate student in the education faculty. She is also the author of a children's book titled *Nipin and the Rocks* (Pemmican 2012). Bouvier engages in deep, interesting and provocative reflection on the ways both Indigenous and mainstream educational understandings live in her teaching and help her to ask deep meaningful questions. She invites us to join her in exploring questions like,

What does it mean to be accountable? And to whom are we accountable? What does being accountable ask of educators, of students? What does it mean to document? What does documentation look like? What purpose does documentation serve in relation to accountability?

Bouvier writes:

Accountability and documentation are fundamental elements that enable teaching and learning to come together and coalesce.... Students' work inherently asks us to sit with it, to speak about it and to allow it to teach us something; in a very real way it demands that we visit, recognize and come to know it. In much the same way, how we speak about a place that we have visited while coming to know more of ourselves in relation to that place

is an act of learning, because through that experience, through that place, a transformation occurs.

This article opens deep questions about what it can mean to assess our students' work responsibly and responsively.

Rick Hesch has read *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum: Purposes, Possibilities, and Challenges* (2011), by Yatta Kanu, very carefully and offers a review of it. In his biography, Hesch writes that he "spent his career working for social justice, equality and democracy in education, principally with Aboriginal parents and students," so this topic is dear to his heart, as I hope it is to us all. Hesch describes how Kanu presents her findings from a two-year study of the effects of integrating the study of Aboriginal perspectives on the school success of Indigenous students. The study was carried out from 2003 to 2005 in four Grade 9 classrooms in two inner-city high schools in Manitoba. Hesch takes us through a chapter-by-chapter account of Kanu's analysis. Hesch concludes, "Kanu's book makes for useful reading not only for anyone seriously interested in improving education for Aboriginal students but also for those committed to a more enriching, progressive and humane education for all Canadian students."

In her article, Gail Jardine investigates some of the crucial acts of legislation, Supreme Court decisions and government policies in Canada that affect both historical and current Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal controversies. Like Hesch, Jardine is concerned to find ways to increase knowledgeable communication between members of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and non-Aboriginals in Canada in order to bring about social justice for the benefit of all. She believes that if more non-Aboriginal Canadians had the opportunity to read the actual texts of relevant official documents, they would not be so quick to dismiss Aboriginal claims in current controversies. Her hope is that study of these documents can open respectful and fruitful dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, teachers and citizens.

I wish to thank Cynthia Chambers and Narcisee Blood, and the *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, for allowing *One World in Dialogue* to reprint the 2009 article, "Love Thy Neighbour: Repatriating Precarious Blackfoot Sites." Chambers and Blood describe traditional *Siksikáitapiiksi* (Blackfoot) life in southern and central Alberta (*kitáóowahsinnoon*) and explain why and how this land that the *Siksikáitapiiksi* and non-Aboriginal Canadians now share was and is honoured, respected and cared for by the

*Siksikáítapiiksi* peoples (of the Blackfoot Confederacy). Chambers and Blood offer a rich description of events that occurred after contact in the late 19th century, events designed to assimilate *Siksikáítapiiksi*/Blackfoot culture and its peoples into mainstream Canadian culture. The details of these events are too often unknown by non-Aboriginal Canadians, and Chambers and Blood discuss important issues involved in past losses and current repatriations. Chambers and Blood also describe two powerful seminars offered to students by Red Crow Community College and the University of Lethbridge. One was a study tour during which the students, instructors, elders or other experts travelled to over 15 different sites in the Alberta portion of *kitáóowahsinnoon* (in the traditional *Siksikáítapiiksi* territory). The learning here was powerful. Narcissi Blood and others describe the repatriation process on the Learn Alberta website at [www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssmc/html/introduction\\_clips.html?index=7#top](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssmc/html/introduction_clips.html?index=7#top).

This article, “Love Thy Neighbour,” creates openings for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, more specifically, for *Káímaa*, *Siksikáí*, *Piikáni* and non-Aboriginal Albertans to come to know one another better and to work together. Elder Andy Blackwater “says that *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoaiksi* (non-Aboriginal Albertans) live together on *kitáóowahsinnoon*; they live together in the same place and their tipis are held down by the same peg. Neither is going anywhere. Neither the knowledge, nor the will, needed to protect and save [Blackfoot stories and sacred places in Alberta] belong to one people or one tradition. Therefore, *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoaiksi* are called to love thy neighbour, to work together, to ensure *kitáóowahsinnoon* continues to nourish us all. The precious places in their precarious state call for all Albertans to re-imagine the future together.”

I hope you enjoy this issue of *One World in Dialogue*. I look forward to receiving articles about events

in your classrooms, analysis of ideas from your reading and research into teaching social studies, and papers from your courses. What strands and skills in the social studies Program of Studies are you exploring in new ways with your students? What are you wondering about? What are you learning? What new resources or learning experiences have you tried that you would like to share with other teachers? Are you a graduate student who would like to submit a class paper for publication? All articles are welcome, peer-reviewed and available to all on the Social Studies Council website at [www.atasocialstudies.ca/one-world-journal](http://www.atasocialstudies.ca/one-world-journal).

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# Introducing the Reviewers

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*One World in Dialogue* thanks those who share their insights and practices in teaching social studies in effective and inspiring ways. We welcome articles that take up any of the multiple aspects of social studies.

*One World in Dialogue* is a peer-reviewed journal. If you are an academic or a graduate student, your article will receive a blind review from two reviewers. If you are a classroom teacher, you can request that your article be either peer-reviewed or editor-reviewed.

Fifteen colleagues have volunteered to review articles submitted to *One World in Dialogue*. Each reviewer has expertise in one or more of the multiple aspects of studying and teaching in social studies:

- Issues and curriculum from any of the social sciences that weave together to form social studies
- Aboriginal issues and education
- Peace education
- Global education
- Social justice
- Immigration issues
- Multicultural education
- Intercultural issues in second language teaching
- Comparative education
- Intercultural communication and education
- Innovative uses of educational technologies to promote learning and create new knowledge in social studies
- Environmental ethics, environmental education, and ecological teaching or teaching for sustainability

## Reviewers

### Pamela Adams

*University of Lethbridge*

Pamela Adams received her BA/BEEd (1981) and her MEd (2000) from the University of Lethbridge, and her doctorate (2005) from the University of Calgary. She taught junior and senior high social studies for 17 years before being seconded to the University of Lethbridge in 1997. In addition to being the Faculty of Education's Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) coordinator for six years, she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in the areas of social studies education, collaborative inquiry and action research, school improvement, adult learning and professional development. In 2005, she was appointed a teaching fellow in the U of L's Centre for the Advancement of Excellence in Teaching and Learning and is currently an assistant dean in the Faculty of Education. She has written extensively about school improvement and teacher professional learning, including her recent book with David Townsend, *The Essential Equation: A Handbook for School Improvement* (Detselig, 2009). Pamela is passionate about working with student teachers and teacher mentors through PD activities related to establishing learning communities and collaborative environments that have student learning at their heart.

### Cecille DePass

*University of Calgary*

Cecille DePass is respected within university and community spheres for her teaching, research and community service. She is a former Commonwealth

scholar; a professor at the University of Calgary; past president/chair of the Education Sector, Canadian Commission for UNESCO; past president of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC); and former associate director of the Cultural Diversity Institute, University of Calgary. Her Caribbean roots and sensitivity to social justice issues infuse the spirited approach she brings to her work. In teaching, she deliberately creates highly collaborative working environments with graduate and undergraduate students. Most of her work addresses immigrant and visible minority experiences.

### **Dwayne Donald**

*University of Alberta*

Dwayne Donald (Aipiomaahka) was born and raised in Edmonton and is a descendant of the Papatash Cree. He taught social studies at Kainai High School, on the Blood Reserve, for 10 years. He is currently an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. Dwayne is particularly interested in the curricular and pedagogical significance of Aboriginal–Canadian relations.

### **Sharon Friesen**

*University of Calgary*

Sharon Friesen's research interests include the ways in which K–12 educational structures, curriculum, learning and leading need to be reinvented for a knowledge/learning society. She has specific interests in the promotion of deep intellectual engagement; the ability to create learning environments that require sustained work with ideas; and the pervasiveness of networked digital technologies that open up new ways of thinking, new ways of working, and new tools for working and living in the world.

### **Mryka Hall-Beyer**

*University of Calgary*

Mryka Hall-Beyer teaches courses on remote sensing (satellite image analysis) and general geography, including travel study courses, in the University of Calgary's Department of Geography. She currently directs the department's master's program in geographic information systems. In her previous lives, she spent 17 summers as a Parks Canada naturalist in Quebec, taught elementary outdoor education and ran an organic farm, among other activities. She currently mentors Project Explorer, which places senior geography and geology undergraduate students in classrooms as subject experts to help teachers with the spatial aspects of elementary social studies.

### **David Jardine**

*University of Calgary*

David Jardine is a professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. He is the author of the forthcoming book *Pedagogy Left in Peace* (Continuum) and has an interest in how all knowledge, whatever the discipline, is ancestral and therefore unavoidably part of social studies.

### **Jennifer Lock**

*University of Calgary*

Jennifer Lock is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. She has also taught junior and senior high school social studies. Her area of specialization is educational technology, and she has a keen interest in leveraging digital technologies to enhance communication, collaboration and the creation of knowledge in the humanities, specifically social studies.

### **Patrick Loyer**

*Alberta Teachers' Association*

Patrick Loyer is an executive staff officer with the Alberta Teachers' Association. He has an interest in social studies, particularly in the area of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) education. He has been a teacher and educator for 30 years.

### **Darren Lund**

*University of Calgary*

Darren Lund is a professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, where his research examines social justice activism. He was a high school English teacher for 16 years, and in his rookie year he formed an award-winning student activist program, Students and Teachers Opposing Prejudice (STOP). He is currently the Welcoming Communities domain leader with the Prairie Metropolis Centre, and has an interest in the topics of diversity, democracy and human rights.

### **Lisa Panayotidis**

*University of Calgary*

Lisa Panayotidis is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. A cultural historian of Canadian education, focusing on late-19th-century and early-20th-century contexts, she examines how visual culture and notions of spatiality (the social production of space) shape and reproduce our individual and collective identities and subjectivities, inside and outside school. She is particularly interested in the teaching of historical thinking and visuality in social studies.

**Carla Peck**

*University of Alberta*

Carla Peck is an assistant professor of social studies education in the Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta. Her research interests include student understandings of democratic concepts, diversity, identity, citizenship, and the relationship between students' ethnic identities and their understandings of history.

**Sylvie Roy**

*University of Calgary*

Sylvie Roy is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. Her interests are related to language: bilingualism and multilingualism, teaching and learning languages, and sociolinguistic issues. She is also interested in *la francophonie* in general and discourses related to French in Canada.

**Stefan Sikora**

*Mount Royal University*

Following undergraduate work at Notre Dame University, Stefan Sikora received a BA in history and political science, a BEd (with distinction) in social studies, an MA in Native education, and later a PhD in Aboriginal philosophy (all from the University of Calgary). Stefan also did master's work at the University of Victoria as a research fellow in existential psychology. He later attended the University of Cambridge in Great Britain for postdoctoral studies in the philosophy of education. He has worked as a schoolteacher and a principal (in both the public and the private sectors) and also as a college and university lecturer. Stefan is the author or editor of academic texts and articles, as well as published and

unpublished books of poetry, novels, essays and plays. In 1980, his one-act play *Clowns* was nominated for a Governor General's Award. He has served as a keynote speaker and presenter at numerous academic conferences and workshops.

**Amy von Heyking**

*University of Lethbridge*

Amy von Heyking is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge. Her research areas include history teaching and learning, and the history of school curriculum. She is the author of *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905–1980* (University of Calgary Press, 2006). She is on the executive board of The History Education Network/Histoire et Éducation en Réseau (THEN/HiER) and a contributor to *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (UBC Press, 2011) and *The Anthology of Social Studies* (Volume 1) (Pacific Educational Press, 2008). She is also the author of a number of history teaching resources published by Scholastic Canada.

**Cora Weber-Pillwax**

*University of Alberta*

Cora Weber-Pillwax is an associate professor and program coordinator in the Indigenous peoples education specialization, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. She holds a BEd in secondary English, a master's degree in international/intercultural education and a PhD in Indigenous peoples education. She has over 40 years of experience in Aboriginal education, and her recent work focuses on the significance of Indigenous knowledge in contemporary systems of health and education in Aboriginal communities.

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# Trying to Make the Mission Statements of Social Studies Curriculum Inhabit My Social Studies Pedagogy and Vice Versa

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*David Scott and Laurence Abbott*

*David Scott is a doctoral student in curriculum and learning at the University of Calgary. Working with his supervisor, Darren Lund, his research explores the potential of particular approaches to historical inquiry to promote the democratic aims of the Alberta social studies program and direct teachers to help students become aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities and world. Scott is particularly interested in exploring the viability of emerging approaches in history education that involve introducing the temporal domain of the future as a space for students to reimagine current socio-political arrangements.*

*Laurence Abbott is a doctoral candidate in social studies curriculum at the University of Alberta. His current research work involves exploring how teacher identity shapes understandings and interpretations of curriculum. Over the last five years, Abbott has taken an increasing interest in history education and its relationship to citizenship and the development of students' participatory and transformative capacities.*

## **Abstract**

Despite widespread agreement in the field that the purpose of social studies should be to develop students' democratic dispositions and encourage useful citizenship, pedagogy on the ground is not always congruent or consistent with these aims and objectives. In this article we work through the pedagogic and curricular challenges faced by one of the coauthors of this article who has been exploring ways to align his personal pedagogical practice with the Alberta social studies program's call to help students become aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities and world. Specifically, this article reports on a pilot study in which two classes of Grade 8 social studies students responded to a powerful inquiry question asking them to compare and explore whether analogous conditions that led to the Italian Renaissance are present in the city where the students reside. We assess the extent to which a sustained engagement with a powerful inquiry question made the topic interesting and engaging for students, helping them to better understand their city and the world in which they live. Further, we seek to appreciate the extent to which this kind of engagement fosters a sense of personal and collective agency.

## Introduction

In the realm of education, Smith (1999, 94) sees “a kind of cultural amnesia taking root in the midst of everything, a certain forgetfulness of purpose, or a deepening difficulty in identifying how or whether the activities fit together in any meaningful way.” Here, Smith draws on Lyotard (1984) concerning the end of grand narratives that anchored human action in the west around such transcendental themes as enlightenment and truth to explain that the contemporary classroom is postmodern in character in the sense that even though teachers’ lessons may be underwritten by clearly defined learning outcomes and mission statements outlined in state-mandated programs of studies, “the relationship between these documents and what transpires in actual practice is tenuous at best” (p 94). He attributes this state of affairs to a cultural grammar at work that is much more powerful in influence than the good intentions of any curriculum document or teacher.

My name is David Scott and I am a practising social studies teacher, now in my seventh year of teaching. The disconnect Smith articulates between the altruistic intention of curriculum mission statements and the lived world of the classroom has been evident in my own practice. I began my teaching career at the junior and high school level in a small town in northern British Columbia. Not long after securing a full-time position teaching social studies and a range of other subjects, I began to get frustrated and disenchanted with my teaching practice. I had become the kind of teacher I was dissatisfied with when I was a student. Like the pedagogy I had experienced for most of my schooling, I had adopted a style of teaching in which I balanced a didactic approach emphasizing content coverage and textbook-driven instruction with a series of hands-on activity-based projects, where student enjoyment displaced purposeful engagement. In covering the content, I tried to exercise fidelity to the bulleted learning outcomes in the program of study, but doing so resulted in a reductive treatment of content within the curriculum document and limited regard for the spirit of the program. I emphasized factual recall, and students were expected to learn names and dates that were both distant from their own lives and had little relevance to the world in which they lived. Looking back at the projects I did with my students, I recognize that although making colourful mosaics out of construction paper to mimic Roman and Byzantine art or replicating portions of the Bayeux Tapestry might have been fun, the tasks themselves lacked authenticity

and pedagogical purpose beyond student enjoyment, and were likely incongruent with program outcomes.

Although my pedagogy often followed these approaches, I did engage students in some thoughtful pedagogy well calibrated to the provincial curriculum. This included introducing critical challenges I had encountered as a student teacher in a course taught by Roland Case. There, I learned to ask students critical questions requiring a reasoned judgment based on criteria. In one lesson, for example, I asked students to consider whether Christopher Columbus is an admirable historical figure (Case 1999); in another I asked them to determine where 19th-century Irish or Ukrainian immigrants would choose to settle in Canada based on push-pull factors associated with emigration. Attempting to connect what students were learning in their world, I once asked, for example, whether Osama Bin Laden can be perceived as a good Muslim. Although I tried to make the content of my courses relevant, my efforts were not sophisticated, sustained or purposeful enough to foster informed deliberation (Parker 2008) nor were they meaningful learning experiences for me or my students.

I began to get increasingly frustrated with my teaching and spent more time reflecting on my practice. I realized that my pedagogical style was limited and lacked vision, purpose and focus. It seemed, instead, to be characterized only by inertia. I realized that the mission of the social studies program—that students learn to become “thoughtful, responsible, active citizens” (British Columbia Education 1997, 1)—did not inhabit my teaching practice. Case (1997) could have been describing my teaching when he said: “Without a clear and conscious direction, our teaching is aimless—likely amounting to little more than a string of activities leading nowhere in particular and serving no important purposes” (p 290).

## The Contemporary Scene of Citizenship Education in Alberta

Seeking a more deliberate and conscious direction for my teaching, I decided to pursue a master’s degree in curriculum. In grad school I encountered a rich and broad body of scholarship that had promoted engaged citizenship and transformative agency for nearly a century (Clark 2004; Dewey 1938; Lund and Carr 2008; Westheimer and Kahne 2004). Elements of this body of work continue to influence the development

and focus of mission statements, general outcomes and program strands in jurisdictions across Canada, the United States and many other countries and educational jurisdictions. The influence of this scholarship is evident in Alberta, where the current social studies program, which was rolled out incrementally from September 2006 to 2010, situated the concepts of citizenship and identity as the central organizing concepts. The Alberta program's emphasis on citizenship aligns with what most policy-makers and educators believe should be the overall purpose of social studies education; namely, strengthening and enhancing democratic dispositions and practices.

Although the notion of citizenship is highly contested (Sears 2004), the social studies program in Alberta attempts to bring its own clarity to this term by asking teachers to help "students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world" (Alberta Education 2005, 1). To give this vision for engaged citizenship life and purpose, the new program argues that students "construct meaning in the context of their lived experience through active inquiry and engagement with their school and community" (p 5). In this vein, "the infusion of current events, issues and concerns is an essential component of social studies" (p 5). This part of the program invites teachers to move away from conservative and passive conceptions of citizenship education that some scholars suggest dominates social studies and history pedagogy in classrooms in North America (Barton and Levstik 2008; Levstik 2000; Westheimer and Kahne 2004). The emphasis in Alberta's social studies program shifts, then, to active inquiry linked to students becoming transformative actors within their communities. Complementing this curricular focus, and helping teachers and students to develop effective inquiry skills, is a growing body of literature promoting purposeful inquiry strategies and frameworks that enrich content understanding and work toward the broader goal of imparting skills and dispositions that contribute to democratic life (Case 2005; den Heyer 2009; Denos and Case 2006; Seixas 2006; Wiggins and McTighe 2005). Key to this approach is a shift away from predominantly information-transmission pedagogies, to inquiry oriented around critical questions (Case 2005), essential questions (Wiggins and McTighe 2005) and portals of historical understanding (Denos 2008; Seixas 2006). The intention is to engender the acquisition of subject-matter understanding, content retention and disciplinary processes that help students become sophisticated inquirers in

their communities and the world. Importantly, these approaches make a distinction between remembering content and understanding concepts, notions and ideas (Case 2008; Wiggins and McTighe 2005). In making this distinction, Case (2008) draws on the work of Whitehead to argue that the primary purpose of education is to prevent knowledge from becoming inert, which Whitehead sees as "ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combination" (p 42). These concerns articulate a constructivist conception of teaching and learning in which students are considered as capable makers of meaning, applying insights and processes learned in school to endeavours in real, complex situations needed for active and engaged democratic participation.

Although all of these inquiry strategies can be considered constructivist in that they seek to foster subject-matter understanding and impart disciplinary means and processes, they differ in their approach and pedagogical focus. Critical questions provide students with an interrogative organizer around which they can structure their inquiry and an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of ideas, concepts, notions and content that they are encountering in the curriculum. For Case and Wright (1997), an inquiry question becomes a critical question if it requires a reasoned judgment among options, necessitating the use of criteria to make reasoned judgments, and is connected to outcomes embedded in the core of the curriculum. Examples of critical questions aligned to the Grade 8 program of study include:

1. What is the best location for a successful trading city in Renaissance Europe?
2. Rank selected Italian city-states in order of their influence in shaping a Renaissance worldview (Alberta Education 2012a).

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) similarly seek to promote subject-matter understanding through essential questions that help guide units around "big ideas" that emerge from the content under study. A question is an essential question if it lies "at the heart of a subject or curriculum (as opposed to being either trivial or leading), and [promotes] inquiry and uncoverage of a subject" (p 342). Examples of essential questions include:

1. To what extent do we need checks and balances on government power?
2. What are the common factors in the rise and fall of powerful nations? (p 15).

In a slightly different vein, the portal of historical understanding model (Denos 2008; Seixas 2006) seeks to help students work with criteria, disciplinary

approaches and processes that professional historians use to explore the past. Students could, for example, be asked to examine 16 events cards outlining significant moments in Canadian history from 1755 to 1845 and then, using criteria for historical significance (that is, had a deep and long-term impact), choose the eight events that are the most historically significant (CSHC 2012).

To varying degrees, jurisdictions across Canada have invested significant time, money and professional development support for teachers to integrate these inquiry models into their practice. This is especially true in Alberta where, for example, the critical thinking framework developed by Case (2005) is integrated into online support resources for curriculum and instruction for the social studies program. Similarly, curriculum leaders advocating the Historical Thinking Project, (formerly known as the Benchmarks for Historical Thinking) have worked closely with teachers throughout Alberta in developing lessons and units aligned with their portals of historical understanding model. Further, school districts throughout Alberta continue to provide multiple and ongoing professional development opportunities to aid teachers wishing to adopt these inquiry strategies, including Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) *Understanding by Design* and essential question framework, into their teaching.

There is significant pedagogical value in constructivist approaches like these that focus on students' acquisition of disciplinary skills as a route to subject-matter understanding. In recent years, both authors of this article have invested considerable intellectual energy into incorporating these approaches into our own teaching practices. Our reflective practices explore how these approaches can be shared with pre-service and practising teachers, focusing, particularly, on how to integrate inquiry pedagogies into social studies teaching in the Alberta context. While we find substantial value in these approaches, we are also conscious that they bring with them a range of insufficiencies and instructional challenges. Making them operational in the classroom requires a significant commitment of time and effort, for sure, but these approaches also demand that teachers have or develop a broad and deep understanding of disciplinary foundations and practices. Given traditional expectations to cover the content, most challenging of all, for many teachers, is aligning these inquiry frameworks with the substantial number of learning outcomes in social studies programs. Additionally, deciding what to accept as evidence and how to evaluate the extent to which students are gaining a deep understanding of

a concept also poses challenges for some teachers. Inquiry, if it is purposeful and engaging, requires risk taking on the part of teachers; sites of resistance can arise, especially when students and teachers encounter controversial issues or topics where the teacher has little grounding or foundational background (Levstik 2000; Wiggins and McTighe 2005).

For us, den Heyer's writing on the implications of students and teachers in curricular encounters plays a key role in speaking to another major insufficiency of many widely practised constructivist inquiry models. Building on the work of educational reformers like Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970), den Heyer (2005, 2009), and den Heyer and Abbott (2011) contest the efficacy of these approaches on the grounds that they do not sufficiently prepare students for the processes of political and personal transformation. Although an essential question such as "What is history?" (Wiggins and McTighe 2005, 115) or a critical question asking "Is Christopher Columbus a great historical figure?" (Case and Daniels 1996) are good and necessary questions to take up in social studies and history classrooms, they lack an explicitly ethical dimension. Too often lost in such inquiry is the question of how current status quo personal and social realities could be otherwise. Congruent with den Heyer, we see constructivist approaches as insufficient in fulfilling the kind of ethical and democratic demand of informed deliberation (Parker 2008) on contemporary issues of concern that we believe needs to be a key thread in inquiry. Embedded in many constructivist approaches to inquiry is an implicit assumption that gaining content understanding and disciplinary ways of knowing will be transferable to future democratic engagements after students leave school. This assumption—what den Heyer refers to as *deferred benefit*—is problematic (2011). We believe inquiry should explicitly ask students to deliberate on and engage with issues of concern and should position students as potential agents of change in their communities and world. Such an approach is more congruent with enhancing students' democratic capacities.

Introducing an ethical dimension to inquiry and helping students become transformative actors in their world, however, are often the most difficult elements of this sort of interrogative engagement to capture (den Heyer 2011; den Heyer and Abbott 2011). Den Heyer advocates for a throughline questioning approach, tied to a curriculum-wisdom orientation, that emphasizes connecting the content learned in schools to issues of concern in the present to work toward what ought to be (den Heyer 2005, 2009; Henderson

and Gornik 2007). Building on constructivist approaches that emphasize student acquisition of subject-matter understanding and disciplinary processes that help students become sophisticated inquirers into their world, the curriculum-wisdom approach to social studies education makes ethical considerations related to enriched and enlivened democratic complexity central to the teaching process. Accordingly, teachers working within the curriculum-wisdom paradigm are not asked to ignore or abandon constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, but rather, to embrace a broader sense of the purpose of this knowledge. Specifically, “educators ask their students not only to demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matter but also to exhibit democratic self and social understanding” (Henderson and Gornik 2007, 6). At the heart of the curriculum-wisdom orientation lies Henderson and Gornik’s advocacy for teachers to work with students on “3 ‘S’ understanding,” an inquiry that enhances personal agency and democratic capacities, and integrates subject-matter understanding with democratic self and social understanding.

This interpretation of the curriculum-wisdom orientation has undergone a reinterpretation by den Heyer (2005, 2009), who reframes the definition of 3 ‘S’ understanding as students interpreting subject matter to make reasoned judgments about their present and preferable relationships to society so that they can think through subject content to devise questions about their diverse and multiple relationships with the world. This shift of the subject of social studies is informed by critical and postmodern discourses in theory and research in social studies education that help students investigate how dominant groups determine and are served by the cultural terms and narratives shaping social relations and cultural understandings (Segall 1999, 2006; Stanley 2006). Reworking the curriculum-wisdom orientation, den Heyer moves away from a deficiency model of education, where students are primarily positioned as needing yet-to-be-obtained disciplinary and procedural knowledge, and investigates what students already know, do not know and will not know in their encounter with curriculum. Within this frame, the content and thinking skills engaged with in the course help students investigate how their thoughts and beliefs do not belong to them alone. In this way students’ own sense making and subjectivity become the focus or subject of our inquiry (Abbott, Scott and den Heyer 2008; den Heyer, 2009, 2011).

If the curriculum-wisdom orientation provides the curricular focus, throughline questions are the

gateway to engagement. According to den Heyer, throughline questions are the “questions the content of our courses should help students address” (2009, 31). The throughline notion that den Heyer takes up is rooted in a pedagogical strategy developed by Harvard Project Zero (Active Learning Practise for Schools Project Zero 2001). The strategy emerging from Project Zero offers an interrogative approach that is similar to Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) essential questions. The throughline approach articulated by den Heyer (2005, 2009) builds on the use of questions as a key pedagogical organizer, but departs from Project Zero’s throughline and essential questions by structuring the interrogative engagement to pay attention to students’ and teachers’ sense-making in relation to issues of concern—especially unresolved issues—within the communities in which students live.

Modifying the throughline notion to encourage students and teachers to respond to questions that more explicitly call for ethical engagement, den Heyer interconnects program goals, objectives and specific outcomes for lessons, units and courses by asking relevant and provocative questions about issues of concern that meaningfully connect students with the world in which they live (2009). Further, the throughline approach helps students and teachers better understand how current conditions came to be, by, for example, attending to not only the what and how of the past, but how and why that account of the past is the one taught in schools. The pursuit of this kind of understanding in social studies education opens up opportunities to explore how current sense-making practices limit possible futures and constrain opportunities for individual and collective agency to imagine and shape alternative future trajectories.

Both of this article’s authors have been experimenting with den Heyer’s throughline approach for some time. The questions can be difficult to design, because they must provide students with the opportunity to explore a problem or open pathways for student engagement by questioning a widely accepted understanding. In this vein, a throughline question must be outcome oriented but not pedagogically deterministic. The idea is to harness students’ imaginative capacities to engage with and transform the communities they inhabit, encouraging learning by challenging them to respond to questions that have no easy answers. Below are some examples one of this article’s authors has used in his teacher education class:

- In what ways do current conceptions of teaching and learning separate the classroom from the world?

- How can our teaching help students better understand the world they live in and better appreciate their capacities for being agents of change?

In relation to learning outcomes in Alberta's Grade 7 program, which asks teachers to help students compare and contrast diverse social and economic structures in Aboriginal, French and British societies in pre-Confederation Canada by exploring economic factors for settlement and exploration, along with the identities of historic figures (Alberta Education 2005), possible throughline questions might be:

- How does the social and economic organization of a society shape worldview and relationship to land and resources?
- How might the story of settlement be different if European settlers had better understood Aboriginal relationships with the land and resources?
- How might our understanding of this period in Canada's past help us to better appreciate current issues within our country and other countries around the world?

## Theory Meets Practice

Interestingly, in our survey of the literature concerning inquiry-driven instruction in social studies, there was a dearth of empirical studies exploring the extent to which the inquiry approaches explored in this article promote social studies' *raison d'être*—fostering engaged and active citizenship. Despite this, many jurisdictions have spent considerable time and money in helping teachers integrate these inquiry models into their practice. This scarcity of published studies relating to the generalizable character of these interrogative approaches to social studies is troubling when compared to the rich and broad scope of scholarly and professional literature that advocates these pedagogical modes. While, anecdotally, we are confident that all of these approaches have merit and pedagogical value, we are conscious that practising and preservice teachers would be much more confident incorporating these strategies into their teaching if they could see empirical evidence that these approaches are effective in social studies classrooms.

Currently, there are no published studies assessing how either Case's critical questions or den Heyer's throughline approach affect students' understanding of social studies content or their capacity to be agents of change in their communities. With respect to the portals of historical-understanding inquiry model, studies in the United States by Wineburg (2001) and Van Sledright (2002), who work with children on

concepts and processes unique to the discipline of history, found that children can become adept at undertaking historical analysis and interpretation, and that these skills are important. Given these understandings, there is a need for Canadian research into the relationship between this historical inquiry framework and students' capacity to effect change in their communities.

Taking advantage of this gap in social studies literature, specifically in a Canadian context, we put together a small pilot study to explore how two classes of Grade 8 social studies students would respond to an inquiry question structured in relation to a major topic in Alberta's Grade 8 social studies program. Students were asked to compare whether the kind of conditions that led to the Italian Renaissance exist in the city in which they currently lived. We sought to assess the extent to which a sustained engagement with a powerful inquiry question made the subject interesting and engaging for students, helped students better understand the city and the world in which they live, and the extent to which this engagement fostered a sense of personal and collective agency among the students.

## Pilot Study

The pilot study took place in the winter and spring of 2010, at a publicly funded charter school in Alberta with a mandated focus on inquiry learning, technology integration and outdoor education. The school's inquiry model of learning is based on a rubric created by the Galileo Educational Network (2008), which emphasizes addressing curricula in ways that connect subject matter to real-world questions or problems, linking students with experts and yielding opportunities for ongoing formative feedback loops that enable students to refine and enhance works in progress. The school possesses some characteristics not commonly found in most public school settings—class size is capped at 25 students, an entrance exam assessing grade-level competencies is required for admission to the school and each student is provided with a Macintosh laptop. Additionally, teachers have opportunities to work with curricular leaders to develop inquiry units that align programs of studies with the school's inquiry model of learning.

Our pilot study explores how two Grade 8 social studies classes responded to an inquiry question developed by the lead author of this article, who was the teacher of these classes. He asked whether conditions present in urban Tuscany during the Renaissance

exist in the students' city today. The pilot study question is tied directly to the Grade 8 social studies program topic focusing on modern western worldviews emerging out of the Renaissance. The inquiry question that was chosen for this topic was: Does Calgary possess the necessary conditions to become a renaissance city? Rather than framing a question that asks students to understand how our modern western worldview emerged from the Renaissance, the lead author imagined the unit as a way to use developments and changes during the Renaissance as a lens through which to view the present. Ultimately, it was hoped that this engagement would help students better understand their current historical conditions and open up the possibility that things could be otherwise.

## Method

Students first encountered the inquiry question at the beginning of the Renaissance unit. The question was prominently displayed on the front wall of the class and was reinforced throughout the unit. During the pilot study, students engaged in a number of activities that enriched their encounter with program content and their community. These included mind-mapping and researching the conditions in Italy and Europe that contributed to the Italian Renaissance, and then, in specialist groups of two–three students, conducting more detailed research on a particular aspect of the Italian Renaissance (for example, art, trade, religion). Each group produced an iMovie minidocumentary on their topic that focused on significant changes and developments in their topic area in the Renaissance. Following completion of their iMovie, they applied criteria from the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking project (CSHC 2012) to infer the most significant conditions that contributed to the developments and changes within their area of study.

Each group was then linked with experts in Calgary who currently work in the domain that the students studied—an economist from a major bank, a director of an art gallery and a professor of religious studies at a local university. Students wrote questions and interviewed the experts, ascertaining the extent to which the conditions they identified as leading to particular changes and developments in their topic area are currently present in Calgary. For example, one group inquiring into developments in art noted that there was a great increase in the amount of art created during the Renaissance and many significant innovations in the kind and styles of art produced.

Similarly, a group studying economics noted that Florence and Venice were connected to a number of lucrative trade routes, including the Silk Road, which allowed merchants to monopolize the sale of highly desired trade items from the Middle East, central Asia and China to the rest of Europe. Once students had completed their interview, they posted their questions and findings onto a class wiki. Then, using articles specific to each topic area, they extended and applied their research findings to determine their city's potential to be regarded as a modern Renaissance city. In the final segment, students used their new understandings to engage the inquiry question in a horse-shoe debate format, whereby they had to take a position on the inquiry question and support their arguments using evidence from their interviews and the supplementary research they had conducted.

One of this article's authors, who teaches at the school, collaborated with the other author to develop this study in the context of a school-based initiative to foster research on improving pedagogical practices. Though the research was school-based and teacher generated, the authors endeavoured to ensure that the study was consistent with Canada's tricouncil guidelines on research practices involving human subjects. This included obtaining written permission to conduct the research from school administration, signed consent forms from students and their parents, and the assistance of a coresearcher from a major university in western Canada (the other author of this article) to conduct the focus-group interviews. The class survey was anonymous and was administered by another teacher in the school while the teacher/author of this article was not in the room, ensuring confidentiality.

At the end of March 2010, students in both classes (n=48) responded to an online survey instrument consisting of 25 Likert scale statements and two open-ended questions. Questions in the online survey sought to examine the extent to which this approach and inquiry question made the subject interesting and engaging for students, whether it helped the students to better understand their city and the world in which they live, and the extent to which this engagement fostered a sense of personal and collective agency. In addition, the teacher sought and obtained three student volunteers from each class to participate in two semistructured focus-group interviews conducted by the other author of this article, who was not their teacher (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook 2007). In the focus-group interviews, students responded to six open-ended questions that were supplemented with follow-up questions to supply richer insights about the students' experience with the approach of the

inquiry unit. Once the data was collected, we examined student and teacher responses for emergent themes (Miles and Huberman 1994). Data from the online survey instrument and the focus-group interviews were inductively coded for common categories. From these, we created category codes and identified a series of major themes that emerged from the data.

## Findings

Based on our analysis of the data, a number of insights emerged. A large proportion of students reported that they had found this inquiry approach to be challenging and engaging. Specifically, 73 per cent of the students agreed with the statement, "Overall I felt challenged by the project" and 63 per cent agreed with the statement, "I think this project was an engaging way to learn about the Italian Renaissance." In addition, students reported a high level of personal investment in the minidocumentary they produced in expert groups, evidenced by the 86 per cent of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I was proud of the iMovie that my group created."

Another finding concerned a discrepancy between students' perceived understanding of their specialized research topic and their understanding of the Renaissance unit as whole. Of the students who completed the online survey, 90 per cent agreed to the statement, "I feel that through this project I gained a good understanding of the specific element of the Renaissance that my group researched (arts, religion, science and so on)." This is compared to 65 per cent of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I feel that through this project I gained an OVERALL understanding of all the conditions that allowed the Italian Renaissance to occur."

This difference between specific research topic understanding and an overall understanding of the Renaissance is supported by student responses from the focus-group interviews. For example, a female student who recently immigrated to Canada and joined the class halfway through the school year stated:

We each focused on a different topic, and that was new for me. It was nice because we got to go really in-depth on one topic and didn't learn anything about the other topics. It was nice to learn about one thing so in depth, instead of just skimming the surface.

Another theme that emerged from the data set was how this pedagogical approach helped students

develop and express a more nuanced understanding of their city and urban-planning priorities. This was reflected on in a focus-group interview where a female student researched arts and culture commented:

I found that I did learn some things about Calgary. I learned that on each construction project we do we have to use 1 per cent of the project's budget for art, and I learned that we're trying to become more of an art-based city.

However, while students did develop a deeper understanding of forces at play within their city, the data suggest that students did not have adequate opportunity to participate in redesigning or future-thinking for their city. From the survey data, only 41 per cent of students said yes to the question: "Did learning about the Renaissance in this way help you to visualize a different future for the city of Calgary as a renaissance city?" This was the lowest of any response on the survey. This theme was confirmed repeatedly through the focus-group interviews in the student comments below:

I think [the inquiry question] helped guide us through the project, but it needs to be revised because it didn't have anything to do with us. Even if you answer yes to the debate question, does that really change our lives?

If we changed the question, it would help us to look more at ourselves and what we can do, rather than Calgary as a whole. This would lead to not just what Calgary has to do to become a renaissance city but what we can do to make it become a renaissance city as well.

Both comments reflect shortcomings of the question used in this unit.

Although the inquiry question was intended to be a throughline question, it did not fully meet the 3 'S' criteria. As pointed out by these students in the focus-group interview, the question did not provoke students and the teacher to interconnect the subject matter with themselves and their social world. Although this question and the strategies built around it led students to develop a deeper and richer understanding of their own community, deepening and enriching their knowledge and understanding of the Renaissance, these comments show that the question did not go far enough. In particular, it did not demand them to deliberate on action they might take to bring about a renaissance in Calgary if they had determined that their city needed to emerge from a dark age.

In this sense the question asked for this unit was more closely aligned to an essential question (Wiggins and McTighe 2005). Acknowledging the limitations of this study, our findings suggest that an

essential question is insufficient to foster engaged citizenship and transformative possibilities the lead author had hoped to foster with his students. However, in spite of the question's weakness or deficiency, these students expressed an appreciation for what this curriculum encounter intended to provoke. The students were able to connect past to present in a meaningful way, and they recognized possibilities for their own agency to be a factor in bringing about a different future for their community.

Given this, a second iteration of this study organized around a stronger throughline questioning strategy (den Heyer 2005, 2009) tied to a curriculum-wisdom approach (Henderson and Gornick 2007) might contribute to a better understanding of the capacity of the throughline strategy to encourage personal and collective agency among students. This could be achieved by asking a question that shifts the focus of inquiry from making linkages tied primarily to the past to a focus tied to the present, and to further extend and project students' understandings to the unresolved temporal domain of the future as an area for inquiry and action. In this way ethical considerations related to democratic living as to future trajectories for our community could be explored, thereby positioning students as agents of change. A third avenue to consider is how the question could implicate students own sense making itself, as a historical artifact in need of explicit study (den Heyer 2008, 2011; den Heyer and Abbott 2011). To this end, possible throughline questions that could guide a unit on the Renaissance include:

- How might the ways we learn about the past shape how we imagine our future as a community?
- In what ways is your worldview shaped by place and time?
- How might we bring about a renaissance in our own community?

## Conclusion

Although the throughline approach has yet to gain significant traction in the field, we believe it can foster the kind of democratic experiences called for by Alberta social studies program. The deliberate ethical dimension to this approach further aligns well with elements of the Ministry of Education's vision for the educated Albertan in 2030 calling for "an engaged thinker, and ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit" (Alberta Education 2012b). Although the four inquiry approaches explored in this article may all

provide a pedagogical means to fulfill this vision, because of a dearth of empirical studies of the democratic viability of these approaches, no such claims can be made at this time. Consequently, we see a need for empirical findings concerning the tensions and congruities between particular approaches to inquiry, and the explicative democratic aims of the Alberta program and other social studies mission statements across Canada and the US.

Therefore, we propose a qualitative research program that will assess the four inquiry frameworks discussed in this study; the program would be answering the following overarching question: In what ways does a sustained encounter with each inquiry model promote democratic engagement and influence students' self-perceptions of their respective capacities for individual and collective agency? To assess each of these inquiry approaches in different contexts, we plan to employ purposeful sampling (Merriam 2009) to identify three junior high school settings (Grades 7–9) to conduct the research. The criteria for selection will include securing three teachers, one teacher at each site, at a common grade level (that is, three Grade 8 teachers), all of whom have an interest in fostering democratic citizenship experiences with their students. To generate a unit aligned with each inquiry model for these participants to enact in their classrooms, we will rely on the LearnAlberta.ca website (Alberta Education 2012a) and Historical Thinking Project (CSHC 2011) website, along with other custom resources. Following Yin's (2009) advice, we plan to draw data from six channels, including classroom observations, field journal notes, audio files, classroom documents, student surveys and focus-group interviews. Ultimately, we hope that a more extensive and robust "multiple case study" (Stake 2006; Yin 2009) approach to this research will yield data and subsequent findings offering rich insights into the democratic viability of approaches to inquiry that are already well established in the literature and have received, to varying degrees, official sanction and financial support.

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# Alberta Heritage Fairs—A Secret That Needs to Be Shared

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*Belinda Crowson*

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Caution! Being involved in the Heritage Fairs program will likely change the way both students and teachers think about history. The Heritage Fairs are an engaging learning opportunity for Grades 4 to 9 students to discover compelling stories of Canadian and Albertan history. Through the Fairs program, students explore history in a dynamic, hands-on learning environment. The motto of the Alberta Heritage Fairs is Looking Back, Reaching Forward; the Fairs program teaches students to appreciate and understand history and to develop skills that will help them at school and in their future careers.

In general terms, for the Heritage Fairs program, students research and present on a history topic (Canadian, provincial or local). In practice, though, it is much more than that. Students choose their own topic for the Fair; this ability to study a story that interests them rather than one that is assigned is very compelling for many students. Some choose to share personal stories, such as the history of their family's farm. Others tell of the grand Canadian themes—the Mounties, the Halifax explosion, Canadian politicians, sports heroes and more. Some students discover new information about their own community.

All learn how to research, question and compile information. While the content of the project is history, the Fairs program is about so much more than social studies. The Fairs program enhances literacy skills and emphasizes such communication skills as researching, interviewing, writing and public speaking. Students are encouraged to present their topics in original and creative ways, and many employ drama and art in their presentations. The Fairs program develops citizenship skills, making students more aware of the history of their communities and the resources and organizations within their communities.

Students are encouraged to use both written and nonwritten sources and to develop interview skills. These interviews often lead to valuable intergenerational dialogue and learning. The Fairs program helps students find their own ideas and voices and gives voice to communities helping to build better and stronger communities across our province.

The Fair program works best as a community effort where students have access to such experts as historians, genealogists, archivists and curators in their own communities and where students use such resources as libraries, archives and museums in their communities. The Fairs encourage lasting partnerships between schools, youth, families, heritage organizations, museums and the community. Students are encouraged to use primary resources for their research whenever possible.

The results of students' research are presented at public exhibitions. Some schools choose to have a school fair (sometimes combined with their science fair) where projects are presented and judged. Additionally, there are five Regional Heritage Fairs across the province (Southern Alberta, in Lethbridge; Calgary; Central Alberta, in Red Deer; Edmonton and District; and Northern Alberta, in Grande Prairie).

At these public exhibitions, students share what they learned and tell the stories of their provinces, communities and country. Judges interview students about their projects, asking questions about their research and encouraging students to share what they have learned. Judges are recruited from the community—may be politicians, university history professors, teachers, public historians, authors or museum staff.

The Fairs have a long history in the province, starting in 1995. Originally, the Fairs were a provincial partnership between the Alberta Museums Association and the Alberta Social Studies Council. Nationally, the Fairs had the CRB Foundation (later Historica Foundation) as the funder for the Fairs and host of a national Heritage Fair each July.

Museums Alberta pulled out in 2004. In 2009 the newly combined Historica-Dominion Foundation decided not to continue supporting the Fairs, and the last national Fair ran in the summer of 2009. For some of the Regional Fairs, the partnership with the ATA Social Studies Council continued, but it did not continue at the provincial level.

With these partnerships gone, many people believed the Fairs had ended in Alberta. But that was not the case. The five regional fair coordinators decided that the Fairs program and what it offered to

students were too important and should not be lost. Over the years the Fair coordinators had received incredible feedback from students, parents and teachers. For many students, the Heritage Fair was the best thing they ever did in school. Many students returned to the Fair year after year, and many even graduated from being participants to being judges and to helping organize the Regional Fairs. So the Fairs continued, albeit on a smaller scale and with no national Fair or national organizing body and few provincial partnerships.

Fortunately, the Historical Society of Alberta offered to step forward temporarily to support the Fairs and provided funding for a few years. For the past several years the Historical Society of Alberta has welcomed one student project from each Regional Fair to its annual conference where the students present to historians from across the province.

Now, in 2012, things seem to be coming together to re-energize and grow the Fairs program. Canada's History has decided to step forward and provide a national framework for the Fairs with the new Young Citizens program. Check out the projects posted on that site ([youngcitizens.ca](http://youngcitizens.ca)) to see what Heritage Fair students have achieved in 2012.

But none of this is possible without the teachers because it is in the classroom where the Fairs truly live. Judges are needed at the Regional Fairs. Committee and organizational volunteers are needed. Visit one of the Fairs this spring and see what students from across the province are doing. Tell your colleagues about the Alberta Heritage School Fairs and let's see if next year we can ensure that every teacher across the province is talking about this wonderful opportunity.

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# Invoking Accountability and Documentation Through “All My Relations”

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*Vicki Bouvier*

*Vicki Bouvier is Métis, of Cree and French descent. She was born and raised in Calgary and currently resides there with her seven-year-old son. She is a graduate of the University of Calgary and holds a bachelor of arts degree in International Indigenous Studies. For the past 16 years, Bouvier has worked in the Aboriginal community in various capacities. She is currently the coordinator of an Aboriginal youth outreach program situated in the Native Centre at the University of Calgary. Bouvier is also the author of a children’s book titled Nipin and the Rocks.*

But people make a place as much as a place makes them. Indian people interacted with the places in which they lived for such a long time that their landscape became a reflection of their very soul.

—Gregory Cajete, *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*

Accountability and documentation are fundamental elements that enable teaching and learning to come together and coalesce. In coming to learn more about

the process and importance of these two elements, I found myself contemplating what the terms *accountability* and *documentation* mean and, furthermore, what they mean from an Indigenous perspective. It seemed to me that although the literature I was reading was speaking to me about the specificities of these terms, I was still left with these questions: What does accountability look like from an Indigenous perspective? How is documentation manifested through an Indigenous way of knowing? In order to make sense of these questions, I began articulating and writing about what accountability and documentation meant to me as a Métis educator. Out of my enquiries and writings, this piece was formed: a documentative exhibit of my own coming to know. To begin this piece, I will first situate myself in my Métis way, through a story that describes the first moments where my inquiries were ignited, a point of self-transformation. Following the story, I will describe the four realms of accountability, the relationship between accountability and documentation, and how documentation is manifested.

## Learning Through Story and Place

A short time ago, I was invited by a peer to be present in a *place*<sup>1</sup> in which her students' artwork was displayed. As we stood together in the hallway that housed the creative pieces, my colleague began describing the artwork through the students' own written words; her chosen form of documentation. The student herself divulged the significance of shading and movement within her piece, and articulated the importance of lighting and positioning that embodied her illustration. As my colleague continued to read aloud the excerpts from the student's documentation, I felt as though I was being drawn into a place in which I was being asked to bear witness to the happenings of her classroom. I was witnessing the processes of the students' own coming to know through their own words. Moreover, I was inadvertently thrust into a learning process of my own as I came to know the world of art through the students' learning. Through the unexpected act of bearing witness, I realized that by making a piece of work public through documentation reveals an essential piece of the learning process.

Students' work inherently asks us to sit with it, to speak about it and to allow it to teach us something; in a very real way it demands that we visit, recognize and come to know it. In much the same way, how we speak about a place that we have visited while coming to know more of ourselves in relation to that place is an act of learning, because through that experience, through that place, a transformation occurs. We are re-created as a result of the place, and the place is re-created as a result of our interaction in situ. Furthermore, learning is calling us to document where we have been and what we have come to know by invoking a realm of accountability that is inherent in the process of creating knowledge. Subsequently, documentation and accountability are premised on one another and thus form a reciprocal relationship. As a result, educators and students should be asking themselves some key questions: what does it mean to be accountable? And to whom are we accountable? What does being accountable ask of educators, of students? What does it mean to document? What does documentation look like? What purpose does documentation serve in relation to accountability?

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1. I italicized the word *place* because all that we know and are coming to know are held in place, and it is in relation to a place that we create and re-create ourselves, each other and community. *Place* isn't symbolic only of the classroom but of the subjects, fields, inquiries and even students' work that we arrive at, visit with and are intimate with.

## Four Realms of Accountability

In Indigenous thought, our mere existence as human beings is predicated on an intricate web of kinship alliances that first encompass ourselves and move outward to envelop our family, community and universe. These kinship alliances are known as "all my relations." The complex system of relationships provides Indigenous people with a template of how we are to carry out our lives, and how we are to maintain and invoke harmony and balance. Essentially, all my relations are our four realms of accountability and teach us how to be responsible human beings.

The first realm, the self, entails seeing, hearing and observing the self in relation to the other three realms. Accountability in this realm relies on keeping in good relations with the self. Treating oneself with love, compassion and understanding is essential. Knowing one's own place in the circle of relationships; that is, being aware of one's inherent gifts and talents while developing and using them for the greater good.

The second realm, the family or each other, encompasses maintaining good relations with our family or the people we are closest to. Accountability to each other encourages people to realize the impact of their life on the lives of others. It also entails sustaining and renewing generational knowledge and ways of knowing.

The third realm, community, casts upon us a responsibility to act in good faith for the betterment of the community. As individuals, we are accountable to contribute to the well-being of the entire community. We need to see ourselves in relation to the community while asking ourselves, How will this work contribute to the health of the community? How will this work sustain or renew the identity and knowledge of the community?

Finally, the fourth realm envelops the sacred or the cosmos. This realm is inclusive of all animate beings that have come before us and help us to survive on earth (that is, animals, plants, Mother Earth, cosmos and the Creator). We are responsible for caring for ourselves in such a way that we maintain harmony and balance with the cosmological beings. For example, giving thanks each and every day for the gift of life is essential in maintaining balance. Gratitude can manifest itself in the form of a prayer, which can

encompass an offering of tobacco to the Creator—“the source of life”—in order to acknowledge and give thanks for the gift of life. Enacting reciprocity is critical in being accountable; giving of oneself when having received a gift is essential in promoting harmony and balance.

## Documentation

Documentation for Indigenous people is not a new phenomenon. Documenting what we have come to know is embedded in the art of learning and teaching. As far back as we can remember Indigenous peoples have documented pivotal occurrences in their history to create or reaffirm their identity, culture or way of knowing. For example, the Blackfoot and Lakota people both used Winter Counts, pictographic communal calendars, to bring forth and make prominent one key event that happened in the year span of winter to winter. The process of selecting one specific occurrence was a serious undertaking, and great effort was made when selecting an event that held significance and importance with the collective. Essentially, it was a marker that the entire community identified with and saw themselves in relation to.

In his seminal work, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, Keith Basso (1996) illustrates the critical nature of documentation in the process of becoming intimate with a place:

In modern landscapes everywhere, people persist in asking, “What happened here?” The answers they supply, though perhaps distinctly foreign, should not be taken lightly, for what people make of their place is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth. Although the two activities may be separable in principle, they are deeply joined in practice. If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing the social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. We are, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine.

Asking these important questions force us to adhere to a certain level of responsibility—accountability. A story taken from *Wisdom Sits in Places* illustrates this succinctly:

They came to this country long ago, our ancestors did. They hadn’t seen it before, they knew nothing about it. Everything was unfamiliar to them.

They were very poor. They had few possessions and surviving was difficult for them. They were looking for a good place to settle, a safe place without enemies. They were searching. They were traveling all over, stopping here and there, noticing everything, looking at the land. They knew nothing about it and didn’t know what they would find.

None of these places had names then, none of them did, and as the people went about they thought about this. “How shall we speak about this land?” How shall we speak about where we have been and where we want to go?”

Now they are coming! They are walking upstream from down below. Now they are arriving here, looking all about them, noticing everything about this place. It looked to them then as it looks to us now. We know that from its name – its name gives a picture of it, just as it was a long time ago.

Now they are happy. “This looks like a good place,” they are saying to each other. Now they are noticing the plants that live around here. “Some of these plants are unknown to us. Maybe they are good for something. Maybe they are useful as medicines.” Now they are saying, “This is a good place for hunting. Deer and turkey come here to eat and drink. We can wait for them here, hidden close by.” They are saying that. They are noticing everything and talking about it together. They like what they see about this place. They are excited!

Now their leader is thinking, “This place may help us survive. If we settle in this country, we must be able to speak about this place and remember it clearly and well. We must give it a name.”

So they name it Goshl’ish Tu Bil Sikane [Water Lies with Mud in an Open Container]. They made a picture of it with words. Now they could speak about it and remember it clearly and well. Now they had a picture they could carry in their minds. You can see for yourself. It looks like its name. (Basso 1996)

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators arrive at a place with their students in which they are called on to become familiar with, to name and to become a part of the terrain—the landscape. We become accountable to the landscape or “field” as we are beckoned to become an intimate part of the topography in order to derive knowledge from it. We are asked to be present in a space where we come to know ourselves and each other in relation to the place.

The above story also illustrates the inherent power of calling something into being—it reinforces the power of words. N Scott Momaday (1997), in his well-known work *Man Made of Words*, speaks of the importance of words, “At the heart of the American Indian oral tradition is a deep and unconditional belief in the efficacy of language. Words are intrinsically powerful.” He urges us to not be careless and to take great care in the art of expression because words and language are sacred. The sole enactment of oral tradition forces us to use our words wisely, to carefully select the words that we use to articulate ourselves. Our voices are our own vessel of self-expression and are inherently a means of administering accountability. The act of listening is equally as important as the role of speaking. Arriving at a place requires all educators to first listen to what the place has to offer us, and then in turn listen to themselves to know what they too have to offer both the place and each other. Furthermore, it is equally important that we listen to the students while teaching them how to listen to themselves and others. As educators and students come to listen and speak about a place in relation to them, together they enter a space of cocreating a collective understanding of why and how something came to be; they are cocreating the process of coming to know.

## Conclusion

Coming to know one’s self in relation to the four sacred realms is essentially the definition of education. The process of coming to know through all my relations ensures a process of creating and renewing who we are as Indigenous peoples. The four sacred realms of accountability illustrate a framework for cultural and communal identity and continuity. Documenting the process of coming to know is essential in transmitting knowledge to subsequent generations and should not be taken lightly. Documentation is a

physical manifestation of how we have come to know what we know. Whether it be a prayer, a song, a collage, a digital piece or a play, all of these call us to be accountable to all my relations and to stand within and speak of our own truth.

When educators and students alike are documenting pieces of work, certain questions should be provoked within us: what are we asking of ourselves and others when we announce the work of our students? How are we going to welcome/invite people into the places where our students’ learning took hold and was manifested? How are we going to speak about this place in a meaningful way? As I ask these questions of myself, I am reminded of a quote in a wonderful piece of writing by David Jardine (1998); “[We] become someone through what [we] know.” Embedded within this notion is evidence that documentation is in fact a re/telling reflection of both educator and student alike; together they are making public a piece of whom they have become in relation to a place they visited. In conclusion then, as we embark on the process of coming to know, it would seem only fitting and ethical to ensure that we first document our work for others to see because within it resides the possibility to learn from each other, and second, to do so with due care and diligence because we are revealing a piece of ourselves that inherently reveals a piece of each other, community and universe.

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# An Invitation to Explore the Roots of Current Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Relations in Canada

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*Gail Jardine*

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During the summer of 2012, newscasts and websites reported controversies about whether or not, and if so under what conditions, the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline will be allowed to pass through British Columbia to carry Alberta oil to the Pacific Ocean and beyond. Will Canadians resolve these controversies by upholding the importance of environmental, constitutional and Aboriginal treaty rights? Or will we turn away from these possibilities and continue with policies that are environmentally risky and disregard First Nations treaty rights, but create at least short-term profits and employment? This controversy is not only important for all Canadians to understand, it is also a rich one for social studies students and teachers to investigate. It involves learning about environmental concerns, constitutional guarantees involving who benefits from a province's natural resources, corporate practices, media literacy, First Nations treaty rights and Aboriginal perspectives.

In every grade, social studies teachers are mandated to take up Aboriginal perspectives and to analyze multiple perspectives on current affairs to increase students' understanding of the world around them and their potential roles in it (Alberta Education 2005). How do Aboriginal and treaty rights live in ongoing controversies involving First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and other Canadians? What historical documents are implicated in the comments we hear today in the news? How do government legislation and policies from the past live in the Enbridge Gateway pipeline controversy? I offer the following passages downloaded from newspaper websites as one possible jumping-off point for social studies teachers and students to use to pursue deeper understanding of the relevance of Canadian government legislation, Supreme Court decisions and government policies to current Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations in Canada.

## **The Summer 2012 Controversy**

### **Passage 1**

In a *Globe and Mail* op-ed, British Columbia premier Christy Clark named five conditions that would have to be met before her government would agree to let the Gateway pipeline pass through British Columbia. Condition 4 stated:

Legal requirements regarding aboriginal and treaty rights must be addressed and first nations must be provided with opportunities to benefit from these projects. In B.C., we have led the way in working with first nations to ensure new developments are a win for communities, industry and the province. (Clark 2012)

## Passage 2

The next day, the Yinka Dene Alliance, a group of five First Nations in the BC Interior, issued a statement, saying it rejected Clark's "sales pitch." They continued with this response, as reported in the *Vancouver Sun*:

The aboriginal groups claim the premier is bargaining with land that they say will never be for sale at any price.

"It is absolutely unacceptable for our premier to play a game of 'the Price is Right' while putting our lands, our waters and our futures at risk to devastating oil spills," said Terry Teegee, tribal chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

"This is our lives, the well-being of our families that she is playing with. We won't let her sell our lands out from under us." (Crawford 2012)

## Passage 3

Aboriginal and treaty rights have a lengthy history of being highly contested in Canada. This is highlighted in Tom Flanagan's comments cited in the *National Post* on this controversy:

This month's interprovincial tussle over the Northern Gateway is just the beginning, experts say: The pipeline could face sabotage and a legal morass that would challenge the limits of aboriginal law and sovereignty over disputed lands.

"[It is] difficult to foresee a quick completion of this pipeline," said Tom Flanagan, former advisor to Stephen Harper and a professor of political science at the University of Calgary. "The difficulties are very real and they're large."... The company said it has been negotiating with First Nations groups for years, but if Enbridge could not find an agreement with aboriginal leaders, the federal government would have the authority to expropriate—a murky proposition when balancing the rights of aboriginals.

"First of all, the leadership in these bands have convinced themselves that they own this land rather than that they have a claim to it," said Mr. Flanagan, who has written widely on First Nations issues.

According to law "it's crystal clear that the government has the right to authorize projects with payment of compensation for any damage to the value of the claimed land."

Enbridge has a constitutional obligation to consult native groups affected by the pipeline. But what defines consultation—whether that means providing information, promises of collaboration or obtaining consent—remains untried.

"The Supreme Court has ruled consultations to be inadequate or too hasty, or that there was not enough information at the table or that they didn't seem to be sincere," he said. "There's no clear standard on what constitutes adequate consultation." ...

Mr. Alexander, who is also representing several bands fighting the construction of oil pipelines, foresees Northern Gateway as an unprecedented test of aboriginal rights.

"It will be one of the most exciting and interesting times in aboriginal law because there's never been so much friction," he said. "Aboriginal rights have never really had to go up against the national interest, which is extremely unique and extremely interesting, in a bit of a morbid car accident sort of way." (Gerson 2012)

## Passage 4

In this passage, from *CBC News*, claims from Enbridge are denied by Aboriginal leaders:

A group representing several BC First Nations says Enbridge is wrong to claim 60 per cent of aboriginal communities along the proposed route of the Northern Gateway pipeline have signed on to the project.

Coastal First Nations executive director Art Sterritt says he has checked with every aboriginal group along the route from Alberta to Kitimat and only found two that have signed equity agreements with Enbridge.

Sterritt also accuses Enbridge of padding its First Nations support by widening its pipeline corridor to include aboriginal groups that would not be impacted by a spill and by including groups that don't have rights and title to land near the pipeline route.

"Enbridge expanded its pipeline corridor by 80 kilometres to increase its numbers. Many of these communities that have signed on are located outside of the areas that will be most impacted by a spill."

“We are absolutely mystified about the inclusion of the Métis in Enbridge’s 60 per cent. It’s ridiculous to include groups that don’t have Aboriginal Rights and Title to land within the pipeline corridor,” he said. (Canadian Press 2012).

### Passage 5

This controversy offers many perspectives to consider, many advantages and disadvantages, and claims and counterclaims, to evaluate and weigh. Here are excerpts from a *Winnipeg Free Press* article:

Regardless of short-term ups and downs, Canada’s resource economy is booming as never before. Industrialization and urbanization, chiefly in Asia, will be the unstoppable engine driving the world’s appetite for our resources. This should be an opportunity not just for all Canadians, but especially for many aboriginal Canadians who inhabit the land surrounding the mining and energy projects underway or planned across the mid- and far North.

In fact, this new resource-based wealth could be the key to progress in ending the shameful plight of too many First Nations people in Canada. To do so, however, we are going to have to change behaviour and expectations on both sides of the aboriginal/non-aboriginal divide. Happily, far from being a distant and improbable prospect, we can already discern the new shape of the relationship.

Indigenous conflict with resource developers is hardly new. Since the arrival of Europeans, mass evictions, pollution and social turmoil related to resource wealth have been facts of indigenous history.

In one of the most profound changes in recent Canadian history, however, aboriginal people are now poised both to shape and capitalize on the wealth-producing possibilities of resource extraction.

We don’t appreciate the positive significance of what has happened because too many of us are still stuck in the politics of confrontation of the 1980s and 1990s, when indigenous leaders fought for political attention, constitutional guarantees, redress of historical grievances, land claims settlements, self-government and resource rights. That generation of indigenous leaders was hugely successful and changed the country in the process.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has decreed governments and mining companies have a duty to consult aboriginal people before proceeding with

development projects. Like it or not, indigenous peoples will henceforth be major players in Canada’s resource economy.

In other words, Canada has said “yes” to many of the demands of indigenous Canadians.

But the most important—and subtlest—change has taken place inside aboriginal communities. A new generation of leaders preoccupied with economic progress has emerged. First Nations and Inuit communities across the country have set up development corporations, joint-venture companies with resource firms, locally owned businesses and consulting operations. Hundreds of aboriginal students each year attend college and university programs, studying everything from business to engineering, the mining trades and environmental remediation. Thousands of aboriginal people now work in the resource sector, with the numbers swelling yearly. (Crowley 2012)

We need to decode the swirls of phrases and terms that arise in controversies involving Aboriginal and treaty rights, such as the ones around passage of the Enbridge pipeline, by analyzing them in relation to their roots; that is, in relation to the acts of legislation and historical policies that have influenced them and that are no longer clearly visible in the news stories we currently hear and see. This can help students learn how to make careful, well-informed responses to issues, to the various voices within them and to the voices we hear in the media. Ideally, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers and students will be able to analyze such issues together.

### What Do Many Non-Aboriginal Canadians Know About Relevant Canadian Acts of Legislation?

From 2004 to 2006, I taught the Siksika Option of the University of Calgary’s Master of Teaching Program at Old Sun College, Siksika. I learned then that there are many Canadian government acts of legislation, policies and practices that affect the daily lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, even now, in the 21st century. I had heard of some of them (the *Indian Act* for example) but did not realize the full extent of their effects. I learned from these conversations and was grateful to hear the student teachers’ perspectives. But I also understood that it was not fair to ask Aboriginal people to constantly educate

non-Aboriginal people on what the Canadian government legislation actually is. Non-Aboriginal Canadians are implicated in the legislative acts, laws, treaties, court judgments, policies and practices their government has enacted. The idea that only Aboriginal peoples are affected by or involved in these policies is a mistake that I think social studies teachers have a responsibility to correct. Non-Aboriginal Canadians are implicated, even when this is not explicitly and consciously realized. It is the government of all Canadian voters that has created the legislation and policies that affect all of our lives here and now. Although I read and converse with Aboriginals to learn about their cultures, I could and should research what is part of my culture; namely, the British and Canadian government documents that have affected Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations in Canada.

In 2007, when I first began to research this in a focused way, the specific texts of some of the commonly mentioned legislation, like the *Indian Act*, were very hard for me to find. I expect that some scholars would have been able to find them more quickly, but even though I have been a social studies methods teacher, I am not a specialist in Native studies, political science or law, and it took me far longer than I expected to find the full texts of important legislation. In addition, some of the texts are extremely difficult for me, a nonlawyer, to understand. In 2007, I finally found much of the information I was searching for on Bill Henderson's Virtual Law Office website ([www.bloorstreet.com/300block/ablawleg.htm](http://www.bloorstreet.com/300block/ablawleg.htm)). However, now, the full text of each of these acts of legislation is easy to find on the Department of Justice's website ([www.justice.gc.ca/eng/az.asp](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/az.asp)).

Non-Aboriginal social studies teachers are often hesitant to teach Aboriginal perspectives for fear they might misrepresent important issues. However, there are now excellent teaching resources on Alberta Education's Learn Alberta website ([www.LearnAlberta.ca](http://www.LearnAlberta.ca)). Searching for Aboriginal studies on this website lists many helpful teaching resources, including many videos. And, of course, the Online Reference Section is a treasure trove. *Making Connections to Land, People and Places* (CARC 2009) is another online resource that offers rich learning opportunities. When it comes to investigating government legislation pertaining to Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations, the new professional development resource for educators, *Walking Together: First Nations, Metis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum* (Alberta Education 2011a), is extremely helpful. For example, clicking on the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights stone, on the Observing Practice link, then on Treaties, will take you to a video

of Charlene Bearhead (Alberta Education 2012c) teaching students from Parkland School Division.

When Bearhead asks her students, "Who knows what a treaty is?" the students answer, "It is a written agreement." "Like trade or something." (Have these students previously studied NAFTA, or have they heard about this in the mass media?) Another student then says that the Canadian government made peace treaties when they wanted land. A third student says, "Treaties solve problems since they are official documents saying, 'These are our terms, these are your terms.'" The students agree that most commonly treaties are between two nations, but when Bearhead asks the students, "How many people here have ever been a part of a treaty?" she is met with silence. So she asks again, "How many people here are a party to a treaty ... that they have some role to play in a treaty?" the students are still silent, so their teacher says, "I have. I am. All of you are, because a treaty has two sides... Now when a government signs a treaty, it's not just the people who happen to be in government at the time. A government represents the people of a country, so by them signing a treaty ... all those people who come afterwards who are citizens ... are party to that treaty... so it is important for all of us to understand that and know that because we also have a treaty responsibility, not because we signed it but because we are citizens of this country."

It is important to acknowledge that treaties signed in the past are still in force today. For example, when the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763, France ceded its claims to its remaining Canadian lands to Britain. This included Quebec. In 1967, Charles de Gaulle visited Quebec during Canada's centennial when French separatism was growing. He created a national furor by proclaiming, "'Vive le Québec libre' to an ecstatic crowd in front of Montreal City Hall ... Prime Minister Lester B Pearson issued an official rebuke saying, 'Canadians do not need to be liberated.' De Gaulle [cut] short his trip and [returned] to France." (CBC Archives 2012). I remember that, at that time, Canadians were certainly maintaining the continuance of the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Quebec was ceded by France to Britain and now it is part of Canada. Canadians were insistent that France needed to continue to recognize the terms of that Treaty.

Just as our prime minister noted in 1967 that the Treaty of Paris is still in force, the Canadian government, our federal government, made treaties with many First Nations, who were the Indigenous inhabitants at the point of European contact on this land we now call Canada. Like the Treaty of Paris, these treaties are still in force. Some were even signed in

the 20th century, the century many Canadians living today were born in. These treaties have never been cancelled, but they have been nullified in practice. Andrew Bear Robe, Siksika Nation, a specialist in political science and Aboriginal law, agrees that treaty issues are not well known by non-Aboriginal Canadians and welcomes their interest and presence in his classes. Bear Robe (Alberta Education 2011b) refers to “sleeping and dormant treaty rights.” How has this happened? Why has it happened?

Has the Canadian government been assimilatory or does it respectfully recognize Aboriginal and treaty rights? In the remainder of this paper, I argue that the Canadian government’s acts of legislation, policies and practices do both. I present acts of legislation, Supreme Court judgments and policies that have two conflicting sets of effects and invite you to examine them with your students (and, hopefully, report your experiences in a future article in *One World in Dialogue*).

**Table 1. Three Presentations of Canadian Legislation Affecting Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Relations**

Chronological List of Acts	Acts Affirming Aboriginal and Treaty Rights	Acts Reinforcing Assimilation
The Royal Proclamation, 1763	The Royal Proclamation, 1763	
The Gradual Civilization Act, 1857		The Gradual Civilization Act, 1857
The British North America Act, 1867		The British North America Act, 1867
The Gradual Enfranchisement Act, 1869		<i>The Gradual Enfranchisement Act, 1869</i>
The Indian Act, 1876 (with ongoing amendments, including Bill C-31, 1985)		<i>The Indian Act, 1876</i> (with ongoing amendments, including Bill C-31, 1985)
A series of treaties. The numbered treaties establishing rights and responsibilities in western Canada. Alberta is involved in Treaty 6, 1876; Treaty 7, 1877; and Treaty 8, 1899. Treaty 11 was signed in 1921. The Nisga’a Treaty came into effect in 2000.	A series of treaties. The numbered treaties establishing rights and responsibilities in western Canada. Alberta is involved in Treaty 6, 1876; Treaty 7, 1877; and Treaty 8, 1899. Treaty 11 was signed in 1921. The Nisga’a Treaty came into effect in 2000.	
Duncan Campbell Scott’s Parliamentary Memo, 1920		Duncan Campbell Scott’s Parliamentary Memo, 1920
The <i>Constitution Act</i> and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982	The <i>Constitution Act</i> and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982	
Supreme Court of Canada Decision, Regina vs. Sparrow, 1990	Supreme Court of Canada Decision, Regina vs. Sparrow, 1990	
Supreme Court of Canada Decision, British Columbia versus Delgamuukw, 1997	Supreme Court of Canada Decision, British Columbia versus Delgamuukw, 1997	

## Examining the Actual Texts of Relevant Legislation

Some Canadian legislation, such as the Royal Proclamation of 1763, all the written treaties and the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and the Supreme Court judgment in *British Columbia versus Delgamuukw* (1997) appear to enshrine the rights of Aboriginal peoples in Canada to govern themselves as sovereign peoples, to live on their traditional lands, not to have their livelihoods interfered with and to maintain their hunting and fishing rights. Others, such as the *Gradual Civilization Act* (1857), the *British North America Act* (1867), the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* (1869), the *Indian Act* (1876) and Duncan Campbell Scott's parliamentary memo (1920) appear to intend to assimilate Aboriginal peoples through treating them as "minors," as "wards of the state" with no ability to make their own decisions. The full text of all of these acts are available on the Supreme Court of Canada's website. Acknowledging that events and acts of legislation fall into two categories, each with diametrically opposed effects can help us make sense of the differing perspectives on current controversies (see Table 1).

In what follows, I first present the policies and acts that continue the original nation-to-nation relations that were present in the 18th century and that support Aboriginal and treaty rights (Miller 2004, 65). Then I provide policies and acts that have an assimilatory force.

### Strand One: Nation-to-Nation Negotiations

#### *The Royal Proclamation of 1763*

The first legislative act to support Aboriginal rights to land and self-government is the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was proclaimed by Queen Victoria and ratified by the British Parliament as part of the Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years' War. It reads:

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interests, and the security of our Colonies that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them or any of them as their Hunting Grounds...

And Whereas Great frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the Great Prejudice of our Interests and to the Great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians. In order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the End that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of our Privy Council strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any Purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians, within those parts of our Colonies where, We have thought proper to allow settlement; but that, if at any Time any of the said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for the Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony. (Compiled from Miller 2004, 118–19 and Price 1991, 7)

When The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is taken up in one of the Alberta Grade 7 textbooks (Francis, Scully and Germain 2006), it is a very brief excerpt only. It stops at the statement that "no private Person do presume to make any purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians (p 119)." Does it matter to students' that "if at any Time any of the said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for the Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony" (p 2) is not included in the part of this proclamation highlighted on page 119 (Francis 2006)? What impression is created in students' minds when they read the short version versus long version? Does it make a difference in the significance they draw from this text? Does it help them understand what is behind these references in the Enbridge passages cited above?

The premier is bargaining with land that they say will never be for sale at any price. We won't let her sell our lands out from under us. (Crawford 2012)

The leadership in these bands have convinced themselves that they own this land rather than that they have a claim to it. (Flanagan, cited in Gerson 2012)

We are absolutely mystified about the inclusion of the Métis in Enbridge's 60 per cent. It's ridiculous

to include groups that don't have Aboriginal Rights and Title to land within the pipeline corridor. (Canadian Press 2012)

Indigenous conflict with resource developers is hardly new. Since the arrival of Europeans, mass evictions, pollution and social turmoil related to resource wealth have been facts of indigenous history. In one of the most profound changes in recent Canadian history, however, aboriginal people are now poised both to shape and capitalize on the wealth-producing possibilities of resource extraction.

We don't appreciate the positive significance of what has happened because too many of us are still

stuck in the politics of confrontation of the 1980s and 1990s, when indigenous leaders fought for political attention, constitutional guarantees, redress of historical grievances, land claims settlements, self-government and resource rights. That generation of indigenous leaders was hugely successful and changed the country in the process.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has decreed governments and mining companies have a duty to consult aboriginal people before proceeding with development projects. Like it or not, indigenous peoples will henceforth be major players in Canada's resource economy. (Crowley 2012)

**Table 2. Written Treaty Promises (Price 1991, 56–57)**

Treaty Promises	Treaty Six	Treaty Seven	Treaty Eight
	1876	1877	1899
<b>Mutual Obligations for Peace and Goodwill</b>	*	*	*
<b>Health</b>	* Medicine chest to be kept at home of Indian Agent for the use and benefits of the Indians * Assistance as deemed necessary and sufficient for relief in event of famine or pestilence	*Not mentioned in written treaty text	*Mentioned in Commissioner's Report but not mentioned in written treaty text
<b>Education</b>	*Maintenance of schools on reserves	*Salary for teacher for children once Indians settled on reserves	*Salaries for teachers
<b>Hunting, Fishing and Trapping</b>	* Pursue avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the surrendered area, except on land taken up for settlement, mining, lumbering or other purposes by the government and subject to regulations of the government. *The government to spend \$1,500 a year on ammunition and twine.	* Right to pursue avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the surrendered area, except on land taken up for settlement, mining, lumbering or other purposes by the government and subject to regulations of the government. *The government to spend \$2,000 a year on ammunition.	* Right to pursue avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the surrendered area, except on land taken up for settlement, mining, lumbering or other purposes by the government and subject to regulations of the government. *Ammunition and twine at a value of \$1 per head of families engaged in hunting and fishing.

<b>Land</b>	<p>*Reserves of one square mile per family of five.  *Reserves may be sold by the government with consent of and for benefit of said Indians or appropriated by government with due compensation.</p>	<p>*Reserves of one square mile per family of five.  *Reserves retain the right to navigate the rivers and use the trails, and build roads and bridges as necessary.</p>	<p>*Reserves of one square mile per family of five or land in severalty of 160 acres per Indian.  * Reserves may be sold by the government with consent of and for benefit of said Indians.  * Reserve land may be appropriated by government with due compensation.</p>
<b>Farming Assistance</b>	<p>*Per family: 4 hoes, 2 spades, 2 scythes, 1 wetstone, 2 hay forks, 2 reaping hooks and 2 axes.  Per 3 families: 1 plough and 1 harrow.  Per Band: 1 cross-cut saw, 1 handsaw, 1 pit-saw, the necessary files, 1 grindstone, and 1 auger. Enough wheat, barley, potatoes and oats to plant broken land, plus 1 handmill when warranted, 4 oxen, 1 bull, 6 cows, 1 boar, 2 sows, 1 chest of carpenter's tools. All of the above to be given one sum at the discretion of the Indian Agent and not exceeding \$1,000 to be used during three-year period to purchase provisions as incentive for band members actually Engaged in cultivation.</p>	<p>*Per family of 10 or more: 4 cows.  Per family of 5 to 10: 3 cows.  Per family of 5 or less: 2 cows.  Per family: 2 hoes, 1 spade, 1 scythe and 2 hay forks.  Per 3 families: 1 plough and 1 harrow.  Per chief, minor chief and head for use of band: 1 bull or 1 cow.  Per Band: Potatoes, barley, oats and wheat to plant on broken land.</p>	<p>*When settled:  Per family: 2 hoes, 1 spade, 1 scythe and 2 hay forks and 1 cow.  Per 3 families: 1 plough and 1 harrow.  Per chief for use of band: 2 horses or yoke of oxen, 1 bull, 1 mowing machine, and 1 reaper.  Per band: Potatoes, barley, oats and wheat to plant on broken land, plus provisions for one month in spring during planting.  *For families preferring to raise livestock instead of cultivating:  Per family of 5: 2 cows.  Per chief: 2 bulls and 2 mowing machines</p>
<b>Payments, Annuities and Special Benefits</b>	<p>*Per Indian person: \$12 at treaty signing and \$5 per year.  *Per chief: One horse, one harness, and one wagon or two carts.</p>	<p>* Per Indian person: \$12 at treaty signing and \$5 per year.  *Per chief: \$25 annually.  *Per head chief, minor chief and councilor: A medal and a flag. A rifle the following year. A suit of clothing every 3 years.  Per councilor: \$15 annually.</p>	<p>* Per Indian person: \$12 at treaty signing and \$5 per year.  *Per chief: \$32 at time of treaty signing and \$25 annually.  One medal and one flag. A suit of clothing every 3 years.  *Per headman: \$22 at time of signing and \$15 annually.  A suit of clothing every 3 years.</p>

### ***Written and Oral Accounts of the Treaties and the Status of Oral Evidence***

The next relevant acts of legislation are the treaties between various First Nations and the Canadian government. Currently, the actual terms of the Canadian government and First Nations treaties can be read in full on the Historical Treaties link on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website ([www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1100100028578](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1100100028578)). They are also summarized in Table 2. Written Treaty Promises.

In the *Voices and Visions* (2006) text referred to above, the items in the treaties are not listed. Instead, they are described in general terms in Chapter 12, pp 269–72. On the important issue of whether or not “the land was sold,” this text provides these two explanations:

The Canadian government’s main reason for making these treaties was to gain control of the land and natural resources....

First Nations’ main reasons for agreeing to treaties was to protect their rights to their lands and natural resources. (Francis, Scully and Germain 2006, 269)

In a section entitled, “Canada Today,” the authors state:

Aboriginal peoples and the government of Canada are still dealing with misunderstandings about the treaties. Many First Nations, for example, are involved in ongoing court cases. They argue that their ancestors never signed over ownership of the land. Therefore, they believe they still have rights to it. Hunting and fishing rights are another point of disagreement. It can be hard to know the intentions of the treaty makers as time goes by. (Francis, Scully and Germain 2006, 272)

What does the text mean when it suggests, “It can be hard to know the intentions of the treaty makers as time goes by”? Is this a reference to the often-cited unreliability of oral histories?

Ideas about the reliability of oral history are changing. Teachers have used the telephone game to illustrate what was typical when oral transmission is involved. In this game, a fairly nonsensical phrase would be whispered from one student to the next. The final student would say the phrase out loud. The original message was inevitably severely distorted and everyone would laugh. I suggest that a better analogy from non-Aboriginal society is to ask a room full of Christians to solemnly speak the first two lines of the Lord’s Prayer with me. We speak in unison, with everyone saying the same words at the same

time. Furthermore, we all use language from the time of King James of England, not our present-day Canadian English dialect. Memorizing the Lord’s Prayer is a solemn and serious task. We do not deviate from the words. Memorizing what was said at the treaty negotiations was also a solemn task that elders report learning perfectly until they could repeat it with no deviations (Treaty 7 Elders and the Tribal Council, Hildebrandt, Carter and First Rider 1997, 11).

In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada also declared that oral histories are a legitimate form of evidence in Treaty negotiations. In *Delgamuukw versus British Columbia*, the judgment states:

The factual findings made at trial [in the British Columbia court] could not stand because the trial judge’s treatment of the various kinds of oral histories did not satisfy the principles laid down in *R. v. Van der Peet*. The oral histories were used in an attempt to establish occupation and use of the disputed territory which is an essential requirement for aboriginal title. The trial judge refused to admit or gave no independent weight to these oral histories and then concluded that the appellants had not demonstrated the requisite degree of occupation for “ownership.” Had the oral histories been correctly assessed, the conclusions on these issues of fact might have been very different. (*Delgamuukw versus British Columbia* 1997)

### **The Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982**

In passage 4, Coastal First Nations executive director Art Sterritt is quoted as saying:

We are absolutely mystified about the inclusion of the Métis in Enbridge’s 60 per cent. It’s ridiculous to include groups that don’t have Aboriginal Rights and Title to land within the pipeline corridor. (The Canadian Press 2012)

It is true that the Aboriginal treaties were signed with First Nations, not Métis or Inuit peoples, yet recently when we use the term *Aboriginal* we usually mean all of these groups. It was said earlier that in the *Indian Act*, the Canadian government took on the responsibility for saying who is “Indian” and who is not. This was continued and expanded upon in Section 35 of the *Canadian Constitution Act* and Section 25 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is a key document that legally recognizes Aboriginal rights, in addition to treaty rights. Here are the actual texts of these sections:

## **Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada As Stated in the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982**

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

(2) In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) “treaty rights” includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

35.1 The government of Canada and the provincial governments are committed to the principle that, before any amendment is made to Class 24 of section 91 of the “Constitution Act, 1867,” to section 25 of this Act or to this Part,

(a) a constitutional conference that includes in its agenda an item relating to the proposed amendment, composed of the Prime Minister of Canada and the first ministers of the provinces, will be convened by the Prime Minister of Canada; and

(b) the Prime Minister of Canada will invite representatives of the aboriginal peoples of Canada to participate in the discussions on that item.

## **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982**

25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including

(a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and  
(b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

## **Strand Two: Assimilation**

If all this legislation enshrines Aboriginal and treaty rights, why is there so much controversy around land claims and self-government for Aboriginal peoples? Part of the answer lies in the remaining acts of Canadian legislation that attempted to assimilate Aboriginal people into Euro-Canadian society.

### **The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 and the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869**

In the *Gradual Civilization Act of 1857* and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869*, an adult male born of First Nations/Indian parents could apply to

become a citizen and no longer be considered an Indian. If such a person did this, he would gain the vote and 20 hectares of land. Miller (2004) goes on to explain:

The man’s spouse, their children, and all their descendants also lost their status as “Indians,” their claim to belong to a particular band and reserve, and their ties to a way of life. The supposed genius of the *Gradual Civilization Act* was that it would be a total solution to the “Indian problem,” as many settlers in the future central Canada termed it. As missionaries and schoolteachers worked their magic on Natives on reserves, Indians would be educated and assimilated, qualified and encouraged to jettison their Indian status. As they enfranchised one by one, the number of Indians would dwindle, and with that number the extent of land held as reserves would shrink. Eventually, according to the ideology of the *Gradual Civilization Act*, there would be no more Indians and no more reserves. (p 31)

Miller (2004) also writes that between 1857 and the first passage of the *Indian Act* in 1876, only one Indian applied to become enfranchised and lose his Native status (p 17).

For its part, the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* also “reduced” the number of Indians in Canada and hence reduced the cost of fulfilling treaty promises (see Table 2).

The *Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869* ... said that “no person of less than one-fourth Indian blood born after the passing of this Act, shall be deemed entitled to share in any annuity, interest or rents” of the band to which the person belonged.”... [the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869* also] stated that if an Indian woman married a non-Indian, she and her children—and their children’s children forever—would not be “Indians” as the term was officially used. What this meant in practice was that any Indian woman who married a Native, perhaps a Métis, who was not recognized as an Indian, lost her status. (Miller 2004, 32)

### **The British North America Act, 1867**

The *British North America (BNA) Act* in 1867 made interactions with Indians and their land a federal responsibility. At first glance it might seem that the intent of this act was to affirm the responsibility of the Queen and the federal government to deal with First Nations in the spirit of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, nation to nation. However, reading the text of this act on the Department of Justice website gives

one the distinct impression that it was only jurisdiction that was being settled here. The section is entitled, "Distribution of Legislative Powers" and "Indians and land reserved for Indians" is listed along with other domestic responsibilities of Parliament. It is item 24. Item 23 is "Copyrights" and item 25, "Naturalization and Aliens." Beacons, Buoys, Lighthouses and Sable Island" and "currency and coinage" are two other items listed as domestic responsibilities. Indeed the entire *BNA Act, 1867* is declared to be entirely an "Act for the Union of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and the Government thereof; and for Purposes connected therewith" (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/const/lawreg-loireg/p1t11.html>). It does not deal with any international matters. Canadian government relations with First Nations are no longer seen as nation-to-nation issues. There are echoes of this tension in Passage 2.

### **The *Indian Act* (1867), Residential Schools and Bill C-31**

The *Indian Act* was originally passed by Parliament before many of the treaties were signed and was also intended to assimilate First Nations peoples. Many non-Aboriginal Canadians have heard of this act but never actually read it. Its text is now available to view at the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, Siksika, Alberta ([www.blackfootcrossing.ca](http://www.blackfootcrossing.ca)), and by searching the Department of Justice website ([www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca)).

The *Indian Act* incorporated the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869 but went much further. The government now defined who was or was not a member of an Indian band. The government still does this:

5. (1) There shall be maintained in the Department an Indian Register in which shall be recorded the name of every person who is entitled to be registered as an Indian under this Act.

In 1985, it was again the Canadian government, not First Nations members, who had the power to legally reverse the rules of the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* and of the *Indian Act* of 1869. The *Indian Act* stated:

- An Indian woman who married a non-Indian now lost status on marriage, and the children of that marriage were not entitled.
- On marriage to an Indian man, an Indian woman became a member of her husband's band. (See also Miller 2004, 32)

The amendments of Bill C-31, 1985, were intended to bring aspects of the *Indian Act* more in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982:

The amendments were intended to remove discrimination, restore status and membership rights, and increase control by bands over their affairs. The federal government continues to maintain control over who is registered as an Indian and the rights that flow from registration. The bill represented a compromise between the positions of Aboriginal women and non-status Indian groups, and the national status Indian organization, the AFN [Assembly of First Nations]. (Parliament of Canada nd)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission describes the Historical Context of Residential Schools that were set up through the *Indian Act* this way:

Assimilation policies were adopted by the Canadian government in accordance with prevailing beliefs in the 19th and early 20th centuries that Aboriginal cultures were inferior and incompatible with Euro-Canadian society, and also that Aboriginal peoples were incapable of managing their own affairs.... Special laws were made to ensure that the "progress" of Aboriginal peoples and their absorption into colonial society was directed by the government in accordance with its policies.... From 1892 to 1969, the federal government and the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England (Anglican Church), the Methodist Church (United Church), and the Presbyterian Church entered into formal agreements for the education of Aboriginal Canadians. As mentioned earlier, several Indian Residential Schools continued to operate with government support into the 1990s. In 1920, attendance at residential schools became compulsory under the *Indian Act*. Children aged 6 to 15 could be forcibly removed from their families if they were not sent willingly. Most students would have little or no contact with their families for the full 10 months of the school year, and some would rarely see their families at all due to the distance from the schools to their homes. Many parent-child relationships were completely severed. Many students then returned to their communities as victims of abuse and perpetuated a cycle of violence. They were also expected to raise their own children when they had little experience learning parenting skills from their own families. Thus, the impact of the Indian Residential Schools has been felt by subsequent generations. At residential schools, students were prohibited from speaking Aboriginal languages or practising their cultures, both in and out of the classroom setting. Students were often physically punished or

humiliated if they were found to be speaking their Native language or to be practising their traditional faiths. These measures led to a drastic decline of Aboriginal languages in Canada, and many of those that remain are not expected to survive much longer as the only fluent speakers in some communities are elders. (Parliament of Canada 2009)

The assimilatory intentions of the Canadian government were also explicitly expressed in a memo from Duncan Campbell Scott to a parliamentary committee. He wrote:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think, as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point.... That has been the whole purpose of Indian education and advancement since the earliest times. One of the very earliest enactments was to provide for the enfranchisement of the Indian. So it is written in our laws that the Indian was eventually to become enfranchised.... Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill." The "Bill" to which Scott referred was an amendment to the Indian Act that empowered the Indian Affairs minister to enfranchise any Indian male over twenty-one years of age that the Department considered "fit" for enfranchisement. (Miller 2004, 35–36)

What may be surprising to many of us is that this memo was written, not in the 19th century, but in 1920.

In passages 1, 2, 3 and 5, we see that members of First Nations have not been assimilated into Canadian culture but are fighting in Canadian courts for their Aboriginal and treaty rights.

## Concluding Comments

What can social studies teachers do to help students make fair and respectful sense of these confusing and often contradictory pieces of legislation? How can Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals begin to talk and work together so that all experience justice and respect in Canada? How, as active responsible citizens, can we all help decide where we want to go from here? These documents provide us with a rich array of history, hope, controversies, assumptions and contradictions for students to research and explore. Hopefully, we can all break through the surface

stories, face reality and work out fair, just and respectful resolutions as we also learn to live well and respectfully together.

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# Love Thy Neighbour: Repatriating Precarious Blackfoot Sites

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## **Abstract**

This article explores responsibility for the care of significant Blackfoot places particularly those situated in the province of present-day Alberta. Examples of significant Blackfoot sites are given and the forces that have destroyed many of them are recounted. The story of how Blackfoot were removed from their territory to reserves is narrated and the effect of this on Blackfoot knowledge generation and transfer is interpreted. The forces that destroyed significant sites since the Blackfoot removal are described and present-day stresses on the remaining sites are related. Pressure to extend hydrocarbon exploration and drilling into protected wilderness areas is offered as an example. While current legislative and policy initiatives in Alberta to mandate the inclusion of Blackfoot perspectives in efforts to preserve and protect heritage sites are laudable, this essay offers repatriation as a model for authentic Blackfoot participation in the care of the remaining sites and the beings who inhabit them. Repatriation acknowledges that these places are animate beings with whom humans live. In the Blackfoot view, protecting and preserving places is not enough. Interdependent relationships, like the one between humans and the

places and beings that nourish them, must be nurtured through unimpeded access, continued use and ceremonies of renewal such as visiting and exchanging of gifts. While Blackfoot acknowledge that the non-Blackfoot newcomers are here to stay, they continue to imagine a future where all that from which they have been dispossessed will be repatriated so that they may meet their sacred responsibilities to their territory and all the beings who dwell there.

## Résumé

Le document de recherche porte sur la responsabilité de la protection des lieux auxquels les Pieds-Noirs sont attachés, en particulier ceux qui sont situés dans la province actuelle de l'Alberta. L'auteur cite plusieurs lieux en exemple et explique comment ils ont été détruits. Il raconte comment les Pieds-Noirs ont été déplacés de leur territoire vers les réserves et analyse les conséquences de cet événement sur la production et le transfert du savoir. Il décrit les forces qui ont détruit d'autres lieux importants depuis le retrait des Pieds-Noirs et les contraintes qui pèsent actuellement sur les lieux qui existent encore, notamment l'expansion de la recherche d'hydrocarbures et le forage dans des milieux sauvages. Selon l'auteur, les projets de lois et de politiques en Alberta qui visent à rendre obligatoire l'intégration du point de vue des Pieds-Noirs aux activités de conservation et de protection des lieux patrimoniaux sont louables, mais il propose le rapatriement comme modèle de participation authentique des Pieds-Noirs à la protection des lieux qui restent et des êtres qui y habitent. Le rapatriement reconnaît que ces lieux sont des êtres animés avec lesquels les êtres humains coexistent. Pour les Pieds-Noirs, il ne suffit pas de protéger et de conserver des lieux. Les relations d'indépendance comme celles reliant les êtres humains, les lieux et les êtres qui les nourrissent doivent être soutenues par un accès libre, une utilisation continue et des cérémonies de renaissance telles que les visites et les échanges de présents. Les Pieds-Noirs reconnaissent que les nouveaux venus non-Pieds-Noirs sont là pour rester mais ils continuent

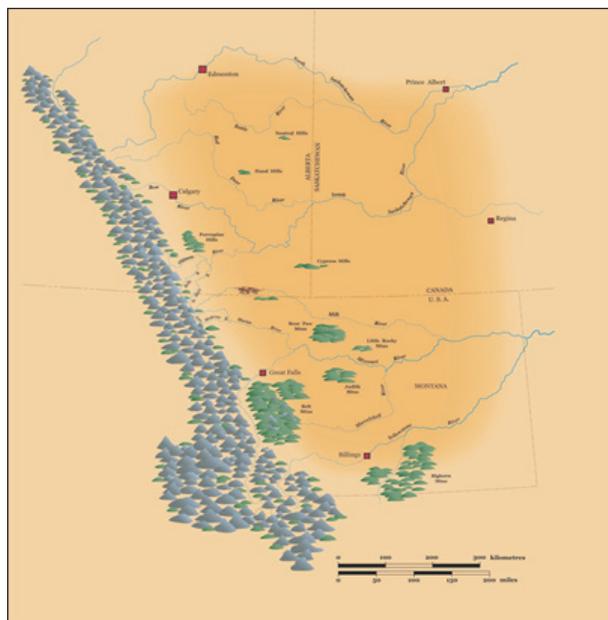
d'imaginer un avenir où tout ce dont on les a déposés reviendra au même endroit afin de pouvoir remplir leurs devoirs sacrés envers leur territoire et tous les êtres qui y vivent.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This article explores the question of responsibility for the care of significant *Siksikáttapiiksi* (Blackfoot) sites, particularly in the province of present-day Alberta. Traditional Blackfoot territory is described and events that eroded *Siksikáttapiiksi* access to, and thus their relationship with, all the land in their territory is related. We give examples of significant Blackfoot sites and recount the forces that have destroyed many of them, including the pressures that urban and industrial development place on the remaining sites. This essay outlines current attempts to include Blackfoot perspectives in the government mandate to preserve and protect heritage sites. The notion of repatriation, which is commonly understood to mean the return of ceremonial objects, is offered as a model for authentic participation of Blackfoot in protecting and preserving these sites. Repatriation, as an idea and a practice, acknowledges the *Siksikáttapiiksi* view that places are animate beings with whom humans live in relationship. Like any relationship based upon interdependence, the one between people and the places that nourish them is nurtured through unimpeded access, continued use and ceremonies of renewal such as visiting and exchanging of gifts.<sup>2</sup>

*Nitáówahsinnoon* or Blackfoot territory extends north to *Aapátohsoo Omáhkataan* (north big river, which was renamed the North Saskatchewan) and south to *Ponokáásisahtaan* (elk river, which was renamed the Yellowstone). The people lived from the eastern slopes of the *Mistákistsi* (the backbone of the world, which was renamed the Rocky Mountains) to the reaches of present-day Saskatchewan,<sup>3</sup> *Omáhkskispatsiko* (Great Sandhills), where people go after death (Blackfoot Gallery Committee) and *Awai'skimmii'ko* (which was renamed the Cypress Hills), hunting and gathering resources such as lodge poles, pine needles and berries.

**Figure 1. Map of Traditional Blackfoot Territory**  
(Courtesy of Glenbow Museum)



*Nitáówahsinnoon* covered over half of present-day Alberta, most of Montana, and parts of Saskatchewan. And while the *Niitsítapiiksi* (in this context, the Blackfoot) shared the land with all other *ksahkomi-tapiiksi* or earth beings (plants, rocks and animals), they shared the cosmos with the *spomitapiiksi* or above beings (spiritual beings, stars and birds), and the *soyiitapiiksi* or underwater beings (fish, amphibians, reptiles, water birds and mammals) (Blackfoot Gallery Committee 2001). Many of the stories and ceremonies of Blackfoot-speaking peoples originate in the sky, and many ceremonies revolve around bundles, who contain parts of animals and plants from all of the realms.<sup>4</sup> These bundles and their contents stand in for the extended network of animate, inspired kin from directions of the territory. The bundles remind human beings of their vulnerability and that their survival depends upon alliances formed with the other beings in times past, reflecting social contracts still in force. The origins of these kinship ties and the ongoing web of reciprocities and interdependent responsibilities they evoke are recalled through song and stories (Ingold 2000). Through ceremonies and ritual, stories and songs, as well as through practices of visiting and feeding, these alliances are continually renewed (Heavy Head 2005).

The ceremonies of renewal were not simple rituals of faith slavishly adhered to by a primitive, animistic people. The ability of *Siksikáítapiiksi* to live well in *kitáóowahsinnoon*<sup>5</sup> depended on deep, extensive, intimate knowledge about all realms of the environment. This knowledge grew by living and attending to *kitáóowahsinnoon*, with all of one's senses and aspects of being. This knowledge also came to people through *paapaitapiiksi* or dream beings, and through vision quests. Knowledge gained in all these ways was transferred from generation to generation through everyday activities, as well as through ceremonies and stories.

At present, it would be true to say that *Siksikáítapiiksi* do not have the extensive geographical and ecological knowledge of their territory they possessed a generation or two ago. People often wonder why this is so. If the land is important to the *Siksikáítapiiksi*, why did they allow these relationships to deteriorate, the knowledge to lapse?

## A Story

We want to tell you a story; it is an old story, one you may have heard before but, like most important stories, it bears repeating. Just as the bundles have to be opened each year always in the same way, just as the sun dance is held each summer in the same place and in the same way, these stories must be told so that the memories are continually renewed. Repeating these stories is also necessary because not all Indigenous people and even fewer non-Indigenous people know this story. The citizens of Alberta, including all those being represented in the bundles—*ksahkomi-tapiiksi*, *spomitapiiksi* and *soyiitapiiksi*—are living with effects of these events. This story is important for everyone living in present-day Alberta. This story needs to be told, even if it offends, although it is not intended to do so. It is too important to be forgotten.

This story begins about 100 years ago, maybe longer. A series of historical traumas in the 19th century—disease, famine and massacre—made it very difficult, if not impossible, for *Siksikáítapiiksi* means of knowledge transfer to remain intact. Successive waves of smallpox spread through intertribal trade even prior to actual contact with the Europeans. Oral accounts estimate that one quarter to one third of the people perished with each outbreak and that over one half of the people died in the 1837 epidemic alone.<sup>6</sup> At the confluence of *Náápi Otsíthaatan* (Oldman River) and *Iisskstaáí'tahtaan* (St Mary's River) near present-day Lethbridge, so many *Káínaí* perished

in the 1837 epidemic that the site is called *Akáá' nisskoo* (Many Dead).<sup>7</sup> When smallpox killed everyone inside a tipi, the flap was sewn shut, warning all who approached of the contagious death within. At Many Dead, the sewn-shut death lodges are now all gone. What remains is a series of tipi rings, a circle of stones used to hold the tipi and its liners in place. But the stone rings for the death lodges are different. A tipi has a doorway facing east, marked by a break in the circle of stones. In a death lodge, the entrance is closed, the stone circle complete. Complete circles of stone, without a doorway facing east, are evidence of these *ii'noiyis* (death lodges). Such circles can be found all over Southern Alberta, including near the walking trails of Lethbridge. They memorialize not only the massive death but also the effects of the epidemics on the people.

Epidemic and famine can sound innocuous, as if there were no perpetrator, as if the near decimation of a people is the inevitable result of natural events, perhaps even fated. This was especially true for the *Niitsítapiiksi*, where historical and ethnographic accounts written by *Náápiikoiksi* (the newcomers) almost normalize famine, as if it were a natural part of life for a “primitive nomadic” people, “subsisting” on a single, unpredictable food source, the “migrating” buffalo herds. So when the bison, whose numbers were estimated to be anywhere from 30 to 70 million prior to European contact, were deliberately and violently decimated within a few short decades, the resulting famine was naturalized.<sup>8</sup> Sayings such as the buffalo “vanished” or “disappeared” are part of everyday English discourse. These euphemisms are taken for granted in curriculum, textbooks, trade books and popular culture, and go unnoticed. Better to say the buffalo “vanished,” as if by magic, than to admit they were massacred without regard for the effect on all the *Niitsítapiiksi*. While loss of the buffalo was devastating for the people, the ecosystem and landscape of the entire Great Plains were irrevocably altered: the wolves, vultures and grizzly bear lost their source of food and abandoned the prairies; the grasslands were no longer grazed, as only the buffalo could graze them; the people no longer set fire to the grass to force new growth and attract the herds.

The decimation of the bison had a domino effect. By the 1870s, the only remaining bison herds were the few in *kitáóowahsinnoon*. *Siksikáítapiiksi* soon found themselves under great pressure to protect the land and the bison from the other First Nations who were starving because there were no more bison in their territories: *Asinaa* (Cree), *Niitsísinaa* (Assiniboine), *Atsína* (Gros Ventre), *Issapó* (Crow)

and *Kaiy'spa* (Lakota/Dakota or “parted hair”). Thus *Siksikáítapiiksi* had to fight with former allies such as the *Asinaa*. While other First Nations wanted access to the last remaining bison herds, the settler governments—the new Dominion of Canada in Alberta and the United States government in Montana—wanted the land and dominion over it.

The slaughter of the bison was not the only massacre perpetrated. The events of January 23, 1870, live on in the collective memory of the *Siksikáítapiiksi*. That cold winter day, the men of Heavy Runner's camp had gone hunting. At dawn, the United States Cavalry, under the command of Major Eugene Baker, attacked the camp and slaughtered over 217 unarmed women, children and old men.<sup>9</sup> The survivors fled north and took refuge on the Canadian side of the 49th parallel, *isskskáakssin*. The *Aamsskáápipikáni* (South Peigan or Blackfeet) of Heavy Runner's camp joined their northern relatives at just below the confluence of the *Náápi Otsíthaatan* (Oldman River) and the *Iisskstaá'tahtaan* (St Mary's River), near present-day Lethbridge.

It is at that place the *Asinaa* found the *Siksikáítapiiksi* camped in the autumn of 1870. The *Asinaa* had headed west to Blackfoot territory, seeking revenge for previous wrongs, and access to the remaining bison. Even with the advantage of surprise, attacking at early dawn, hundreds of Cree were killed. The combined numbers of *Akáinaa* (Bloods), *Aapátóhsipikáni* (North Peigan), and *Aamsskáápipikáni* (South Peigan or Blackfeet) allowed the *Siksikáítapiiksi* to overwhelm their attackers.

There is a plaque, in the river bottom of present-day Lethbridge, which commemorates this “last big battle” between the *Siksikáítapiiksi* and the *Asinaa*. The battle scene in Lethbridge and the “Baker Massacre” on the Bear<sup>10</sup> (Marias River in Montana) are both sites of historical trauma, yet the massacre in Montana remains unmarked: no cairn, no plaque. This dark period is marked in the memory of the *Siksikáítapiiksi*, commemorated in the stories told and retold.

In the early part of the 19th century, *Siksikáítapiiksi* protected their territory and resources fiercely. In spite of continuous attempts to encroach on their territory, *Siksikáítapiiksi* kept fur traders and missionaries at bay as long as they could. American traders eventually won access to *kitáóowahsinnoon* and the *Siksikáítapiiksi*, in part by escalating the exchange of whisky for furs and bison hides, angering the Hudson's Bay Company who believed their charter gave them a monopoly on trade with the Blackfoot. In 1873, the newly formed civilian police force, the Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) marched west, supposedly

to suppress the illegal whisky trade. The people's stories say otherwise. The late Dan Weasel Moccasin recounted how NWMP soldiers would ride into *Siksikáítapiiksi* camps with booze hidden in their saddlebags. The men would approach Blackfoot women and point to their saddlebags, initiating a different kind of trade than the one they were there to halt.

**Figure 2. St Joseph's Industrial School, commonly known as "Dunbow," High River area, circa 1890s**

(Courtesy, Glenbow Archives, NA-2172-7)



All of these forces—disease, starvation, warfare and whisky—were in play by 1877 when Red Crow and Crowfoot and other leaders made treaty with the Dominion of Canada, a young British colony concerned about the expansion of American interests north of the 49th parallel. *Siksikáítapiiksi* do not believe the true spirit and intent of the treaty discussions and agreements were honoured (Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Hildebrandt, First Rider and Carter 1996). The size of the reserves is only one of many outstanding issues from the original treaty.<sup>11</sup> *Káínaí*, *Piikáni* and *Siksikái* were exiled, and, for the most part, confined to small tracts of land within their homelands, separate tracts of land within *kitáóowahsinnoon*. Called “reserves,” the pieces of land “set aside” were miniscule in comparison to the size of the traditional territory. The people and their knowledge were incarcerated within the boundaries of the reserves, separated from *kitáóowahsinnoon*. Indian agents and the NWMP restricted people's movements across those boundaries. Like the Berlin Wall, reserve borders changed everyone's consciousness about

what constituted traditional territories. It also severed the relationships among the *Siksikáítapiiksi* themselves (*Káínaí*, *Piikáni* and *Siksikái*) and between each group and *kitáóowahsinnoon*. The reserve boundaries also changed the relationships between the *Niitsítapiiksi* (Blackfoot) and the *Náápiikoaiksi* (settler peoples). Shortly after the signing of Treaty 7, the churches built and operated residential schools with funding from the Canadian government<sup>12</sup>.

In these schools, children lived for years at a time, separated from their families, their communities and their language. The experience of these schools further severed the people from their memory of the land that once sustained them and gave them identity as *Niitsítapiiksi*. Throughout all of this, consciousness of Blackfoot territory became colonized: the “rez” became the homeland, while *Náápiikoaiksi* occupied all of the remaining *kitáóowahsinnoon*.

**Figure 3. Pupils and Staff, St Paul's School, Blood Reserve, 1924**

(Courtesy, Glenbow Archives, NA-1811-34)



Like refugees exiled to a foreign country, *Siksikáítapiiksi*'s memories of *kitáóowahsinnoon* live in the stories they tell. But when *Siksikáítapiiksi* visit *kitáóowahsinnoon*—the land gifted to them by *Ihstsipáítapiyo'pa*, the Source—when people visit the places where the stories happened, that visiting makes both the place and the stories come alive. For *Siksikáítapiiksi*, the land is an animate being, a relation, and when treated as such, offers gifts in return. When the people visit *kitáóowahsinnoon*, whether the places are “on-reserve” or “off-reserve,” old stories, songs and ceremonies are recalled, new ones given.

## A Storied and Sacred Place

It would be easy to assume from this story that *Náápiikoaiksi* took, and exercised, the power to erase the people's memory, that little or no knowledge of the land could survive this strategy. But that is not so. Stories, along with songs and ceremonies, keep the knowledge of *kitáóowahsinnoon* alive, even when memory of actual places fades. It could be said that each place in *kitáóowahsinnoon* is important to the *Siksikáttapiiksi*. Some places mark events of significance: vision quests, burials, effigies (human and animal), offerings, rock cairns and battles. Some were places of sustenance: buffalo jumps and pounds, root and berry picking spots, campsites, tipi rings, trails and river crossings. Others are sites of creation (Sun and Moon and coming of light): the antics of creator and trickster, *Náápi*; and, the heroic deeds of *Katoyís* who rid the world of harmful beings (Bullchild). Other places are the origin of the bundles and spiritual societies. Others are sites of mortality and portals to the world of *Siksikáttapiiksi*'s ancestors and *paapa-itapiiksi* (dream beings). In Blackfoot, it is said about such places, "There is a holy presence there;" and in English, *kitáóowahsinnoon* has been called a sacred landscape (Reeves 1993; Vest 2005).

It is also a storied landscape. People received the laws or values at places such as *Aakítpisskan* (Women's Buffalo Jump near Cayley, Alberta), where the people not only hunted buffalo but where *Náápi* initiated the first marriage between men and women, and *Óóhkotok* (near present-day Okotoks, Alberta) where *Náápi* was taught the importance of gift giving and the consequences of going back on your word or your gift. Many stories are written directly on the land such as at *Áísínai'pi* (Writing-on-Stone, Alberta) where petroglyphs and pictographs cover the sandstone cliffs. Rock cairns and constellations accompanied by paintings, carvings and offerings (often called "medicine wheels") are found throughout central and Southern Alberta: these are ceremonial sites.

For *Siksikáttapiiksi*, these places are not simply piles of rocks, cliffs or glacial erratics; they are places imbued with meaning and history. These places are the equivalent of books, encyclopedias, libraries, archives, crypts, monuments, historical markers and grottos; these are destinations for pilgrims; places of sacrifice, revelation and apparition; and sources of knowledge and wisdom. For *Siksikáttapiiksi*, these places are repositories for the knowledge left by the ancestors. *Kitáóowahsinnoon*, the ancestors and other holy presences who inhabit this landscape are animate beings with powers of their own. *Siksikáttapiiksi* have

played their part in keeping the memory and knowledge these animate beings bear alive through the continual enactment of the songs, ceremonies and stories. In this way, much knowledge has survived the onslaught of colonialism.

## Precarious Places

At one time, prior to the dark story told above, there were thousands of these sites throughout *kitáóowahsinnoon*. With notable exceptions, like the bison, many of these sites were demolished. Agriculture, theft, dams and science have all contributed to the destruction. Rock formations—such as tipi rings, cairns and other markers—were razed as the prairies were "settled" and grasslands ploughed under for crops. Settlers used what were to them "just rocks" to build fences and water reservoirs, and to secure creek banks from erosion. They used stones to build irrigation canals and to dam rivers, which in turn flooded the land, destroying even more places (Wilson 2004). Grave robbers and collectors disturbed many significant sites; they vandalized and looted burial sites, pilfering "artifacts" such as arrowheads and tools, carting away the bones of the dead as well as their possessions (Reeves 1993). Offering cairns (including "medicine wheels") were excavated: their contents, including spiritual offerings such as *iinísskimm* and pipes, were removed for analysis (Calder 1977).<sup>13</sup>

The Province of Alberta curtailed unregulated excavation and wanton destruction of archaeological and historic sites when it legislated the *Historical Resources Act* (Government of Alberta 2000a). This legislation enabled the province to act in the public interest to designate and protect historic sites and since its passing, significant sites have been better protected than in the past. For example, noted spiritual and offering sites such as Sundial and Majorville were fenced off and interpretive signs displayed. Interpretive centres were erected at Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo Jump and Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park. Pothunters and vandals are liable for fines of up to \$50,000. While Alberta's *Historical Resources Act* is progressive legislation, the department mandated to enforce the regulations pursuant to the Act, for example the Archaeological and Paleontological Research Permit Regulation (Government of Alberta 2002), has been chronically under-resourced.<sup>14</sup> Thus, while somewhat thwarted, illegal possession and trade of objects removed from sacred sites still continues.

After more than a century of continuous pressure, some sites remain mostly undisturbed. But these,

too, are vulnerable. Alberta's main source of wealth is oil and gas<sup>15</sup> and this nonrenewable resource threatens other nonrenewable resources, such as these sites.

The Majorville rock cairn sits atop a simple hill in the middle of the prairie surrounded by a fence and a government plaque. It is an embattled, precarious site surrounded by a major drilling program, 35 square miles (about 90.6 square kilometres) of seismic activity with 128 shallow gas wells drilled and cased in 2005 alone and a similar number of wells planned for 2006. (Chambers 2006, 33)

Jack Ives,<sup>16</sup> former provincial archaeologist and senior manager at the Historical Resources Management Branch, stated in June 2005:

[There is] a rising tide of development everywhere in...localities...[such as] Majorville...especially as more shallow gas is being exploited and that increases the well spacing, the density of drills that people make...and they are making these plays, the dispositions that they get from the Department of Energy...there is a force of development activity that would truly detract from the landscape as we know it and understand it now...so you can appreciate the pressure that these sites are under. (Blood and Chambers 2006)<sup>17</sup>

The Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield in Southeastern Alberta is 1,040 square miles (about 2,690 square kilometres) of unplowed grassland, one of the largest extant blocks of unaltered dry-mixed grass prairie remaining in Canada (Finnamore 1996). This area is home to over 1,000 known species of plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects. Fourteen of these species are "at risk," such as Sprague's Pipit (a bird), and others are endangered, such as the swift fox and burrowing owl (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 2008; Herriot 2009; Russ; Williamson 2007). As well, CFB Suffield is home to many sites of significance to *Siksikáítapiiksi*. In a survey completed prior to the Alberta Energy Company developing oil and gas resources on the base, archaeologists (Brumley and Dau 1985) located 3,712 cultural features, including 2,486 stone circles, 1,071 stone cairns, 104 stone alignments, 5 effigies, 4 medicine wheels and 1 bison kill site. This survey was of only 206.37 square miles (about 534.5 square kilometres), about 20 per cent of the entire CFB Suffield reserve. The numbers in the survey indicate the density of Blackfoot sites in the southern Alberta landscape. Because this land was mostly uncultivated, these sites remained relatively intact

(although some of the cairns were excavated and others vandalized).

In 1992, the Department of National Defence and Environment Canada set aside 458 square kilometres of particularly unique and fragile areas of CFB Suffield for protection. The lands set aside included the Middle Sand Hills, some mixed grassland and the riparian zone along the South Saskatchewan River (Environment Canada 2003; Finnamore 1996). On June 19, 2003, an Order in Council officially established the CFB Suffield National Wildlife Area, placing the protected lands under the purview of the Minister of Defence. Three years later, EnCana Corporation requested to drill inside this protected area. North America's biggest independent oil and gas company, EnCana recorded an annual profit of \$6.4 billion (Canadian) for 2006, the largest in Canadian corporate history (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation).<sup>18</sup> During this period, the Calgary-based EnCana, with over 17 million acres in land holdings in North America, including the Palliser block in Southeast Alberta (Welner 2003), sought permits from the federal government to drill 1,275 shallow gas wells and construct 220 kilometres of pipelines inside the Suffield National Wildlife Area (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 2008; Williamson 2007). The company already operated approximately 1,150 wells in the area. An environmental assessment conducted by the Canadian military in 2005 found that EnCana is failing to meet even the most basic environmental standards at its existing wells in the fragile National Wildlife Area (Williamson).<sup>19</sup>

Urban sprawl on the prairies is a continual threat to Blackfoot sites; a housing boom only exacerbates the threat. A continuous circle of construction circumscribes the outer edge of southern Alberta cities such as Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. Developers buy up both cultivated and uncultivated grassland to construct suburban neighbourhoods; backhoes and bulldozers continually expose important archaeological sites. Historic sites, according to the legislation, are places with historic resources, that is,

any work of nature or of humans that is primarily of value for its palaeontological, archaeological, prehistoric, historic, cultural, natural, scientific or esthetic interest including, but not limited to, a paleontological, archaeological, prehistoric, historic or natural site, structure or object. (Government of Alberta 2000a, Section 1(e))

When development proposals conflict with historic resources, the Heritage Resources Management Branch requires an impact assessment. It is "historic

resources professionals,” as they are called in the legislation, or what Indigenous archaeologist Joe Watkins calls “cultural resources managers” who make this assessment. “Compliance” archaeologists (Watkins 2000, xi) rank order uncovered sites by level of significance, and recommend action accordingly. Highly significant historic resources are further protected through the Provincial Designation Program, which restricts developments that are likely to be detrimental to the resource (Government of Alberta 2000a, Part V). Sites deemed most significant are protected, and materials preserved in some way; most sites do not receive such treatment. In the past, the significance of exposed sites to the *Siksikáitapiiksi* has rarely deterred either construction or destruction. A case in point was the construction of the Oldman River dam and the land it flooded (Glenn 1999).

The *First Nations Consultation Guidelines on Land Management and Resource Development* (Government of Alberta 2005) requires applicants to Alberta Energy, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development to assess if, and how, a proposed project may impact First Nations’ rights and traditional use of the land. If necessary, the applicants must submit to the department a First Nations Consultation Plan for approval. The goal of the First Nations Consultation procedures is to develop strategies to avoid or mitigate the potential adverse impacts on First Nations *Rights and Traditional Uses* wherever possible (Government of Alberta 2005, 4).

Thus, the existence of remaining *Siksikáitapiiksi* sites is precarious (Chambers 2006). And this invites the question: what can be done? What is the responsibility of *Siksikáitapiiksi* to, and for, these sites? The revised *Historical Resources Act* (Government of Alberta 2000a) gives the province of Alberta the power and responsibility to designate significant sites—on provincial crown land—as worthy of preservation and protection. This mandate covers all land with *kitáóowahsinnoon*, not designated as Indian reserve or federal crown lands. Ives (Blood and Chambers 2006) believes that the civil servants within Historic Resources Management—the branch charged with enforcing the Act—are deeply committed to preserving and protecting these places. However, he admits that in the decades since the original *Historical Resources Act* was passed in 1972, the department “managed” these sites primarily from a Western rather than a First Nations’ perspective.

Neither good science nor good intentions are enough to protect places from rapidly encroaching development. While the Historic Resources Management Branch, with a limited budget, is trying to

protect the sites, Alberta Energy, a powerful sister department, is issuing licenses for oil and gas development to proceed. While the *First Nations Consultation Policy* (Government of Alberta 2005) mandates proponents of oil and gas licenses to consult with First Nations prior to beginning development projects, it is not clear what resources are available to First Nations to engage in this consultation in a meaningful way. As well, licenses for oil and gas development generate revenue for provincial coffers, revenue that pales in comparison to the potential cash to be generated from the extractive activities being licensed; for example, seismic exploration and drilling (Ives).

### **Áahkapohto’op: Bringing Home (Repatriation)**

As settler states, such as Canada, dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their land, Sissons (2005) argues that these governments also assumed ownership of the people themselves. Rather than citizens of Canada, Indigenous people belonged to Canada—“our native people.” By extension, their families, belongings and remaining resources, including land and water, also became state property, as did the children. People’s everyday and sacred things became “artefacts” housed in public buildings; they were now “historic resources” owned, preserved and interpreted by the state.<sup>20</sup>

*Kitáóowahsinnoon*, with the exception of the reserves, belonged to the Crown or private landowners. Settler governments removed *Niitsítapiiksi*’s children from their families, as families and by extension their children were collective possessions of the state, and sent the children to residential schools, and adopted them “out” to unknown persons in faraway communities.

It might appear that the *Siksikáitapiiksi* response to this dispossession is to refuse to face the future until the wrongs of the past have been redressed. But that is not the case. While the past must be taught, remembered and understood, the direction being faced is the future.

The appropriation, transformation and reappropriation of indigeneity—whether it be of objects, identity, children, land or sovereignty [...] [is] directed toward the future. [...] Nowhere in the indigenous world are cultural reappropriations regarded as returns to the past; rather, they are always reimaginings of the future. (Sissons 2005, 11)

*Siksikáitapiiksi* imagine a future where they have repatriated all that from which they have been

dispossessed. Repatriation, the root of which is the Latin *patria*, literally means to “return to the fatherland.” *Repatriation* became a common English word among *Siksikáítapiiksi* after the United States first implemented the 1978 *Indian Child Welfare Act* (ICWA) (Holt 2001; Jones 1995). This legislation sought to return to tribal authority jurisdiction large numbers of Native American children apprehended and adopted out of their community. Since the United States government passed the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA) in 1990, the word *repatriation* has been associated with returning certain cultural items to their original communities (Fine-Dare 2002). Following the passage of ICWA and NAGPRA, *Káínaí* (Blood Tribe) actively pursued the return of children and ceremonial items removed to the United States, where a third of *Siksikáítapiiksi* live on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Since NAGPRA, *Káínaa* have successfully repatriated close to 10 *ninámskaahkóyinnimaanisti* (medicine-pipe bundles); about 14 *moo’pi’stáánnissti* (beaver bundles); several *mootókiiksi* (Buffalo Women Society) headdresses; and several *kana’tsomiitaiksi* (Brave Dogs Society) and *ka’koyiiksi* (Pigeon Dove Society) bundles. Because the bundles are living beings, people care for them and speak of them as if they were children. So there is a certain ironic resonance between the repatriation of the bundles and the children. The people know that many bundles are still missing, most in the possession of private collectors, not bound by NAGPRA. The people know that many children are still missing, too. While many *Siksikáítapiiksi* adopted out were found, many more are still not located, living their lives without knowing who they are, who their relations are or where they come from.

*Siksikáítapiiksi*’s efforts to repatriate cultural items and children from the United States influenced their negotiations with the government of Alberta. In 2000, the province passed the *First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act*, which allowed First Nations to apply for repatriation of sacred ceremonial objects from the Glenbow Museum and the Royal Alberta Museum (Government of Alberta 2000b). Under this new law, museums have given long-term loans of several bundles to their original communities. Negotiations for the return of other bundles are ongoing.

Archaeologists have been dedicated to “saving things whose purpose was fulfilled primarily in the past” (Watkins 2000, 7). It could be said that the “historical resources professionals,” as defined in the Alberta legislation referred to above, have the same

mission. While *Siksikáítapiiksi* share an interest in preserving and protecting places and things whose origins are in the past, they do not hold that the purpose of these places and things remains in the past. One of the aims of repatriation—of sacred material, for example—is to bring things home, to put them back into circulation, to allow them to fulfill their purpose of helping people. Exiled to the museums and university storehouses, scientists with technology preserve and protect “artefacts.” Once returned home, and placed in the care of their relations, sacred *Siksikáítapiiksi* “artefacts”<sup>21</sup> are returned to the use for which they were intended. At home, the bundles are once again (animate) kin relations with stories to tell, beings who participate in ceremony, offer protection and answer prayers. Through the ceremonies, the bundles care for and protect the people, as the people care for and protect them.

### **Repatriation as Model for *Siksikáítapiiksi*’s Responsibility to *Kitáóowahsinnoon***

Repatriation may be a way for *Siksikáítapiiksi* to fulfill their responsibilities to and for, and to live out their ongoing relations with, *kitáóowahsinnoon*. Unlike the bundles, *kitáóowahsinnoon* cannot be brought home; it is home. Even though there was a period of time where *Siksikáítapiiksi* were separate from *kitáóowahsinnoon* through the songs, ceremonies and stories, they are obligated to the ongoing care of these places. Repatriation, as an idea and a practice, acknowledges that like any reciprocal, interdependent relationship, the one between people and the places which sustain them must be nurtured through unimpeded access, continued exchange of knowledge and ceremonies of renewal such as visiting and exchanging of gifts and stories. Below are examples of how we imagine repatriation of precarious places might work.

### **Knowledge Exchange: Taking *Siksikáítapiiksi* Knowledge Seriously**

Archaeologists are guided by certain theories and test their theories according to certain parameters, using pre-established criteria. Certain Plains archaeologists (see for example, the essays in Kooyman and Kelley 2004; Yellowhorn 2002) consider the First Nations’ perspective, as recorded in ethnographic data, valuable in interpreting their findings; but for the most part, what *Siksikáítapiiksi* know and understand about *kitáóowahsinnoon* is only taken into

consideration when it is supported by existing archaeological theory and “scientific data.” Most Western academics consider what *Siksikáítapiiksi* know about a place to say more about the people than about the place. Generally, archaeologists, both academics and compliance archaeologists, consider *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge about specific places within this territory, often recounted as stories, as just that: stories, myths and legends. And if contemporary *Siksikáítapiiksi* stories about a place differ from historical and ethnographic accounts, the printed and historical record is assumed more reliable (Crop Eared Wolf 2007). In other words, *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge of place may contribute to anthropological theories about culture or scientific interpretations of place but it does not stand alone as legitimate or useful knowledge about a place, what is found there and what it means.

The dichotomies between universal knowledge and particular knowledge, and between truth and culture, are visually represented at sites such as *óóhkotok* (*Náápi*'s rock). Here a gigantic “glacial erratic” reminds *Siksikáítapiiksi* of a well-known *Náápi* story. The province erected a plaque: on the left is the geological explanation of this formation, a straightforward account, the simplicity of which does not dilute the sheer force of the truth claims being made. This is a glacial erratic that arrived on a sheet of ice. On the right side is one version of one *Siksikáítapiiksi* story of *óóhkotok*. This story is printed in italics, a Western typographic convention for distinguishing fictional story from factual text, oral account from scientific explanation. Many older historic sites are marked in a similar way: the design and discourse of the site interpretations silently point out for the public which story is universal and true, and which is particular and cultural, which is to be believed and which is not, which informs and which entertains.

At newer facilities, such as the one at Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park officially opened June 20, 2007, *Siksikáítapiiksi* were consulted and actively involved in the interpretation of the meaning and significance of the site. As a consequence, the perspective of *Siksikáítapiiksi* is more fully integrated into the design of the interpretive centre and the displays, as well as the content of images, texts and objects. In other words, *Siksikáítapiiksi* stories share the interpretive stage as knowledge, as part of the official interpretation of the place for the public. Many of that public are *Siksikáítapiiksi*. Repatriation means actively seeking ways for *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoiksi* to share knowledge about places in *kitáóowahsinnoon* so both may work together to ensure these precarious

sites, and all who inhabit them and who are nourished by them, survive.

*Siksikáítapiiksi* participation in official interpretation of significant sites is one matter. Employing Indigenous knowledge in the effort to rescue sites vulnerable to impact from oil and gas development, water diversion and use, and logging (called forestry management) is another. As part of the Government of Alberta's “cross-ministry” First Nations Consultation Initiative, the Historic Resources Management Branch has instituted an “Aboriginal Consultation” section.<sup>22</sup> This initiative led to the establishment of a Blackfoot Elders Committee, which advises the branch on matters related to *Siksikáítapiiksi* sites. The “Blackfoot perspective” on these (remaining) sites is a valuable commodity at present (Blood and Chambers 2006). The goal of this committee is for elders to advise the government on locations that are highly significant to *Siksikáítapiiksi* communities, as well as on how to best protect such sites. Mechanisms for decision making that enable meaningful *Siksikáítapiiksi* participation in protection, preservation and use may ensure that fragile ecological areas are better protected, that *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge and history are better preserved and that the Alberta public is better informed. *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge provides a more complex interpretation of sites for an increasingly sophisticated Alberta public. Access to *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge also increases the legitimacy of advocates within government who are anxious to preserve and protect heritage sites from the tsunami of development and the industrialization of the landscape, as well as from casual and professional collectors who relentlessly strip sites of the significant items left there; uninformed users, such as rock climbers, who harm and disrespect certain sites perhaps unintentionally; determined vandals, such as graffiti artists, who spray-paint sacred stones covered in petroglyphs (van Rassel 2006); or simple natural erosion. For the Heritage Resource Management Branch, education of the uninformed (and they agree that sometimes this includes government and industry) is critical to protecting and preserving important sites.

*Siksikáítapiiksi* agree that education is an important tool in saving places from the forces that threaten them. *Siksikáí* First Nation opened its own interpretive centre at Blackfoot Crossing where both *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoiksi*, as well as all visitors, have the opportunity to experience how *Siksikáí* interpret that place, what it meant in the past, and what it means for the future. Red Crow Community College has instituted the first *Káínaí* Studies Program, offering programs, certificates and university transfer

credits for courses in Blackfoot and Indigenous studies, as well as courses in psychology, sociology, anthropology, history and political science from a *Káínaí* perspective, introducing *Káínaí* concepts in the Blackfoot language. Learning from place is key to *Siksikáítapiiksi* identity and processes of knowledge formation, and this has become inherent to the *Káínaí* Studies curriculum. *Káínaí* students enrolled in technical programs to prepare them for wage employment, such as in oil and gas, are required to take a course from *Káínaí* Studies, often a course that takes students onto the land, out to the sites where they have the opportunity to experience these places and what they have to teach.<sup>23</sup>

### **Áakssissawáato'op (Visiting Places) as Repatriation**

As an extension of this mandate to repatriate knowledge about place and to make learning from place part of the curriculum, in 2005 and 2006, Red Crow Community College collaborated with the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge to teach a two-course equivalent summer institute, Connecting with *Kitáóowahsinnoon*. One of these senior undergraduate courses was a special topics seminar entitled Blackfoot Oral Tradition, Knowledge, and Pedagogy. The other was a study tour entitled Visiting Significant Sites in *Kitáóowahsinnoon*. Held throughout the month of June, students attended seminars two or three days a week and then for the other two days they, along with their instructors and often one or two elders or other experts, boarded a yellow school bus and travelled to over 15 different sites in the Alberta portion of *kitáóowahsinnoon*.

It soon became clear that the metaphor of a study tour, of taking a trip with several short stops for the purpose of viewing something like a museum gallery, was not appropriate for what was happening on the visits to these places, for what needed to happen at the sites. For students to learn about these places and from them, they needed to visit the sites rather than tour them (Chambers 2006). As well as being a highly valued social activity, *áakssissawáato'op* is a primary means of knowledge exchange for *Niitsítapiiksi*. A visit holds an expectation that one will spend time, be amicable and relaxed, stay awhile, be a guest, converse and probably eat a meal and drink a cup of tea. And the sites visited during the institute seemed to have a similar expectation; each place called for more than a lecture by an expert, more than a story by an elder. The sites seemed to invite people to make offerings—of tobacco and raw kidney—to sing their clan songs,

bring food, set up lawn chairs, visit with each other and explore or maybe simply sit in solitude. Thus, after the first three or four site visits, the instructors abandoned the model of the museum tour and embraced the *Niitsítapiiksi* notion of visiting the sites. In *kiipátapiissinnoon* (our way of life), visiting includes the practices of offering, feeding and narration (Heavy Head 2005). Thus, as the institute proceeded, the approach to learning from the places changed. Arrivals at a place were marked by making offerings to the site; *kááahsinnooniksi* (inaccurately translated as “elders,” more accurately means “spiritual grandparents”) and archaeologists were invited to narrate some of what they knew about a place and food was shared with each other and the place. At each site, old stories were recounted and old songs were sung but new stories were told as well, and events took place that would become the fabric of future stories. These stories, old and new, are a living repatriation of these sites, bringing the places and the knowledge they hold alive, keeping them alive through the stories.

*Áakssissawáato'op*, a relaxed extended visit at the sites, rewarded all visitors richly. Videotaped interviews suggested that all the participants—the instructors, invited guests and students, even the bus driver and camera operator—became learners. Those interviewed said that more than the course readings, assignments or seminars it was visiting the sites as a group that impacted their learning the most. The participants learned that many of these places were complicated and contested sites of historical trauma (famine, massacre, epidemic), as well as places of spiritual and communal renewal. Slowly, participants realized how colonized, and thus limited, their understanding of *kitáóosinnoon* had been. They experienced a home more expansive than the “rez” or the farm.

Frank Weasel Head visited some of the sites for the first time when he was an “elder” for the class. He had grown up with the stories about these places, and as a ceremonialist, he knew intellectually and understood symbolically, the connections among the songs, the stories, the ceremonies and the land. And while Frank knew the stories—he’d heard them and he could recount them—he’d never been to some of the sites. And that was never a problem for Frank until he actually went. In the video documentary *Kááahsinnooniksi*, Frank describes his realization this way:

Before I went to these sites, they were just stories, just stories; it was almost as if they never happened. But when I actually went to the sites, like *óóhkotok*...I thought ‘ahhh’ that is what they mean. (Blood and Chambers 2006)

It is easy to romanticize *Niitsítapiiksi*'s relationship to the land. In the same video documentary, Leroy Little Bear points out that Blackfoot relationship to the land has almost become rhetoric. Such a simplistic formula as *Niitsítapiiksi* equals ecological infantilizes and Disneyfies the vast knowledge *Niitsítapiiksi* hold collectively and individually about the land. Such stereotypes reduce a complex cosmology to simplistic schemata, such as colour-coded medicine wheels mapping the four directions. Frank Weasel Head's experience suggests that while stories keep aspects of knowledge current and alive, actually going to the sites, being there and experiencing each place with all of one's senses, brings about a deeper, embodied understanding. Being at a place, hearing the stories, participants experienced the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the *Siksikáítapiiksi* as part of "the phenomenology of landscape" (Tilley 1994). People took in the knowledge of each place like the food they ate; they embodied what they learned. For *Siksikáítapiiksi*, to know is to embody what one knows (Heavy Head 2005).

### **Repatriation as a Process Rather than an Event**

And just as important stories and ceremonies bear repeating, so does visiting. If education about the sites is a key way of protecting and preserving them, deeply learning about and from places means returning to these places again and again. Each visit is an opportunity to learn something new, something else or perhaps to remember what was forgotten from previous visits. And some of what happened at the sites during the institute came from things that were not known, unanticipated. At first it was not clear how to best prepare students to learn from the sites, how to manage or organize the experience of the site visits so that on each trip student learning would be maximized. One of us, Cynthia Chambers, assumed that the other, Narcisse Blood, would find the "best" elder to narrate "THE" correct story about each site. There was a lot to learn, and one important thing was that knowledge about a place is not contained within a single story or song, a single storyteller or singer.

While exile to reserves has eroded some of what *Siksikáítapiiksi* know about the land and specific sites in *kitáóowahsinnoon* that knowledge may not be as precarious as the places themselves. Storytellers, as well as ceremonialists, have done much to keep the knowledge alive, even in the absence of access to the land itself. And in spite of all the historical traumas, many people continue to visit the sites and to participate in ceremonies of renewal at these places. From

the early 1980s until the mid-1990s, Carolla Calf Robe (Blood and Chambers 2006) visited Sundial Butte (Carpenter 1995) annually to make offerings, to thank *Istsipatapiyopi* (the Source) for a good year and to ask for another good year and blessings for her children and grandchildren. In 1994, a car accident confined Carolla Calf Robe to a wheelchair. Since the accident, she has not been able to reach the top of Sundial to make an offering. Then, one time, she accompanied clients from the St Paul's Treatment Centre to the site as an elder, and a group of young men lifted her in her wheelchair and carried her to the top of Sundial Butte. There, at the cairn, Carolla made her offering and she was reconciled to the fact that she may never go to that site again. After her last journey to the top of Sundial Butte, Carolla Calf Robe's life changed: she received the strength she needed to endure her infirmity and to live well in spite of it.

Leaving offerings, especially at designated sites on reserves, is a practice that has never subsided. Few people are aware that *Siksikáítapiiksi* continue to make offerings, to bring their pipes around, to give names, to sing songs, at sites all over *kitáóowahsinnoon*. Repatriation means learning from these places and to learn from them we must return to them again and again, with all our relations.

### **Conclusion: Are the Three Ps Enough?**

The Alberta government has implemented policies to involve *Siksikáítapiiksi* in preserving and protecting significant sites in *kitáóowahsinnoon*. The Aboriginal Consultation section of the Heritage Resources Management Branch consults the Blackfoot Elders Committee (1) to locate important but currently unprotected sites, (2) to ascertain *Siksikáítapiiksi* knowledge about specific sites in an effort to better preserve them and (3) to ascertain *Siksikáítapiiksi* perspective on the sites to better protect them from the actions of other government departments, industry and the visiting public.

Preservation, protection and perspective, is that enough? The province of Alberta has jurisdiction over these sites. *Siksikáítapiiksi* participation in the ongoing care of *kitáóowahsinnoon* is at the behest of current policy initiatives and caring civil servants; it is not enshrined in law or treaty, or at least the way the government interprets Treaty 7.

Given this, perhaps *Siksikáítapiiksi* must continue to repatriate *kitáóowahsinnoon* to ensure authentic

participation in the preservation, protection and use of these sites. *Siksikáítapiiksi* perspective cannot be given or transferred; it must be experienced and learned in the act of being at these places, visiting them, doing what is called for at each place. Repatriation is a form of resistance, a way of taking back much of what once belonged to the people, a way of turning trauma into healing (Thompson and Todd 2003). Frank Weasel Head believes the return of the bundles does more to heal a community than any government action or program. For *Siksikáítapiiksi*, repatriating these sites means preserving and protecting them by using them in the way they were intended: making offerings, visiting and feeding the places and the beings who dwell there, performing ceremonies, telling old stories and living to create new ones. Like Carolla Calf Robe and her pilgrimage to Sun Dial, like the late Rufus Goodstriker and his vision quest at *óóhkotok*, like the students from the Summer Institute taking their families to these sites, and like Ramona Big Head, who took her 30 Káínaa High School students to visit these sites, many for the first time. Just as *Siksikáítapiiksi* brought the bundles home so they could be cared for, and in turn, care for the people, to visit these sites and care for them, in the Blackfoot way, means these places will, in turn, care for the people, not only *Siksikáítapiiksi* but all people, all beings who are nourished by these places. Like the bundles, the prayers and the ceremonies, these sites are meant to help and care for everyone and everything, not just human beings.

This is the *Siksikáítapiiksi* belief. In the prayers, *Siksikáítapiiksi* invoke *Istsipatapiyopi*, the Source, to bring understanding and wisdom to everyone, to call for blessings and safekeeping for everyone and to understand that the land is here to nurture all beings. With each passing day, the urgency of these prayers grows. The decimation of the bison is a cautionary tale. In the video documentary *Kááahsinnooniksi*, Andy Blackwater, himself another *kááahsinnooni*, says that now *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoaksi* live together on *kitáóowahsinnoon*; they live together in the same place, and their tipis are held down by the same peg. Neither is going anywhere. Neither the knowledge, nor the will, needed to protect and save these places belong to one people, or one tradition. Therefore, *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoaksi* are called to love thy neighbour, to work together, to ensure *kitáóowahsinnoon* continues to nourish us all. The precious places in their precarious state call for all Albertans to reimagine, and to live, the future together.

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## Glossary

- Aakíipisskan*—Women's Buffalo Jump, Cayley, Alberta
- Aamsskáápipikáni*—South Peigan or Blackfeet (Montana)
- Aapátohsipikáni*—North Peigan (Alberta)
- Aapátohsoo omáhkataan*—"north big river," which was renamed the North Saskatchewan
- Áísínai'pi*—"it is pictured," which was renamed Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park
- Akáíi'nisskoo*—Many Dead
- Asinaa*—Cree
- Atsína*—Gros Ventre
- Awai'skimmii'ko*—Cypress Hills

*Ii'noiysis*—death lodge  
*Inísskimm*—buffalo stone  
*Iisskstaáí'tahtaan*—St Mary's River  
*Issapó*—Crow  
*Isskskáakssin*—the Medicine Line, 49th parallel  
*Istsipatapiyopi*—the Creator  
*Kááahsinnooni*—elder, spiritual grandparent  
*Kááahsinnooniksi*—elders, spiritual grandparents  
*Káínaí*—Blood tribe  
*Kaiy'spa*—Sioux  
*Katoyís*—Blood Clot, a hero who fought evil  
*Kiipátapiissinooni*—our ways  
*Kitáóowahsinnoon*—the place where we get our food and water, the Provider  
*Ksahkomitapiiksi*—earth beings  
*Mistákistsi*—the backbone of the world, Rocky Mountains  
*Náápi*—Old Man, creator-trickster  
*Náápi Otsíthaatan*—Oldman River  
*Náápiikoaiiksi*—settlers and immigrants of European descent (“white people”)  
*Niitsísinaa*—Assiniboine  
*Niitsítapiiksi*—Real people, Aboriginal people  
*Ninámskaahkóyinnimaanistsi*—medicine-pipe bundles  
*Nitáóowahsinnoon*—Blackfoot territory  
*Oksisawaat*—visiting  
*Omáhkskispatsiko*—Great Sandhills  
*Óóhkotok*—the big rock outside Okotoks  
*Paapaitapiiksi*—dream beings  
*Piikáni*—North Peigan  
*Ponokáásisahtaan*—“elk river” which was renamed Yellowstone River  
*Siksikái*—Blackfoot tribe  
*Siksikáítapiiksi*—Prairie people, Blackfoot (including all tribes)  
*Soyiitapiiksi*—underwater beings (water birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and reptiles)  
*Spomitapiiksi*—above beings (spiritual beings, stars, birds)

## Endnotes

1. This chapter is based on a presentation to the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association at York University, Toronto, June 2, 2006. The authors would like to thank Dr Joyce Green for inviting us to propose this paper and for championing its way into print. We also thank Dr Constance Blomgren for a critical reading of an earlier draft and all those readers who encouraged us to persevere in publishing this essay. We assume all responsibility for any errors or omissions.

2. For *Siksikáítapiiksi*, repatriation means more than the return of sacred ceremonial items or children, as important as these are. In relation to place, repatriation means people visit, commemorate or inhabit places that were once sites of trauma. For example, Red Crow Community College is housed in the former St Mary's residential school, transforming the building and the place from a site of colonialism to a place of *Siksikáítapiiksi* pedagogy and healing. For more on *Káínaawa* perspectives on repatriation of sacred things such as the bundles see B Thompson and L Todd's video recording (2003) *Kainayssini imanistaisiwa*: The people go on.

3. There is evidence of significant Blackfoot presence as far into Saskatchewan as the petroglyphs at Herschel (near Rosetown and Kindersley) and the medicine wheel or stone cairns at Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon (Leroy Little Bear).

4. The relative pronoun who is typically reserved for human beings in English. We have used the term in relation to the bundles who (rather than 'which') are animate but not human.

5. *Kitáóowahsinnoon* translates as “the place where we get our food and water” often translated colloquially in English as “our Mother” or “the Provider.” Inherent in the word is the recognition that *kitáóowahsinnoon* is ultimately a gift from *Istsipatapiyopi*, our Creator.

6. The 1837 smallpox outbreak was recorded in a Blackfoot winter count (Raczka). We recommend J C Ewers' historical and ethnographic introduction to the Blackfoot, which includes the devastation caused by smallpox.

7. Prior to the establishment of the trading forts, this site was called “Many Berries.” Over time, with the deaths from smallpox and liquor, the name took on a double meaning: “many berries” and “many deaths.”

8. The written literature on the buffalo, particularly on the Blackfoot and the buffalo, is extensive. We refer the reader to Jack W Brink (2008) *Imagining Head-Smashed-In: Aboriginal buffalo hunting of the northern plains* (Edmonton, Alta: Athabasca University Press) for an extensive review of the literature on bison and bison hunting from a western archaeological perspective. Chapter 9 in particular summarizes the historical record on the demise of the bison in the 19th century.

9. While official reports of the massacre give 173 as the number dead, and Joe Kipp, scout for the Cavalry counted 217 bodies at the massacre site, Darryl Kipp, director of the Blackfoot Immersion for Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, states that oral accounts place the number of dead at over 300. See Big Head (2009) for both a dramatic rendition of the Baker massacre and an account of the historic and oral accounts that informed her play.

10. We normally would provide the Blackfoot name for the Bear River. Here we do not, for Narcisse Blood, as a *nináíms-kaan*, is prohibited from saying/writing the Blackfoot word for “bear.”

11. The first (printed) treaty, between *Siksikáítapiiksi* and *Náápiikoiksi*, was the Lame Bull Treaty 1855 negotiated and signed at a council held at the mouth of the *Ootahkoaisatan* (Yellow River, which was named the Judith River by William Clark) in present-day Montana. See Ewers, 1958 and [www.trailtribes.org](http://www.trailtribes.org).

12. St Joseph’s (Dunbow near Calgary, 1884); St John’s Boarding School (now called Old Sun’s at *Siksikáí*, 1894), St Paul’s Anglican Mission and St Mary’s Immaculate Conception (both located on *Káínaa*). (See Glenbow Archives available at [www.glenbow.org](http://www.glenbow.org)).

13. *Siksikáítapiiksi* view the dismantling of offerings, unless absolutely necessary, as desecration rather than science. While in the past archaeologists routinely “excavated” offering sites, more recent collaboration between contemporary archaeologists and the Blackfoot have resulted in more sensitivity to when to “dig” and “collect” and when not to.

14. As part of the Alberta government’s First Nations Consultation Initiative, the Historic Resources Management Branch of the Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Branch formed an elders’ advisory committee.

15. “In 2005–2006, Alberta non-renewable energy royalty revenue amounted to \$14.347 billion. According to Third Quarter Update for 2006–2007 projections, it is anticipated that non-renewable resource revenue will total \$11.745 billion in 2006–2007.” (Government of Alberta 2008, [www.energy.gov.ab.ca/Oil/771.asp](http://www.energy.gov.ab.ca/Oil/771.asp)).

16. John (Jack) Ives is professor of Northern Plains Archaeology, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta. In the video documentary, *Kááahsinnooniksi: If the Land Could Speak...and We Would Listen* (Blood and Chambers), Ives was speaking as a “regulator,” a manager at Alberta Culture and

Community Spirit, formerly Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, rather than as an academic.

17. Play is oil patch lingo for big development. We thank Dr Constance Blomgren, educator with the Livingstone Range School Division, instructor at Athabasca University, and a member of an environmental coalition in Southern Alberta, for clarifying the meaning of this term.

18. The company’s profits fell in 2007 for a net decrease of \$2.157 billion (Anderson).

19. The Suffield Review Panel website provides background on the site, the proposed project, and documents submitted to the review panel during the hearings in October 2008, while the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (2008) website for the review panel (reference # 05-07-15620) makes available all documents related to the hearings.

20. Much of *Siksikáítapiiksi* material culture remains outside of the purview of the state, living as high-end commodities within exclusive, private collections and the sometimes underground market economy of art dealing peopled with brokers, dealers and buyers.

21. As mentioned, not all “artefacts” become state property, protected by science. Traded among private collectors, bundles and other *Siksikáítapiiksi* materials are auctioned to the highest bidder.

22. This initiative requires all provincial departments to develop “targets” for including First Nations’ perspectives in policy, planning and programs.

23. Although all qualified students may enroll in these programs, not just *Káínaí*, at present enrolment is almost exclusively *Káínaí*. Another form of repatriation of knowledge would be for *Náápiikoiksi* to enroll in *Káínaí* Studies at Red Crow, as a matter of course; for it not to be an anomaly for non-*Káínaí* to be interested in the invaluable historical, political and ecological knowledge available in this program.

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# Book Review

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*Reviewed by Rick Hesch*

*Rick Hesch spent his career working for social justice, equality and democracy in education, principally with Aboriginal parents and students. Currently he lives, studies, researches, writes, acts, loves and plays in Regina Beach, Saskatchewan, and Mesa, Arizona.*

***Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum, by Yatta Kanu. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011***

As is cyclically the case, the subject of Aboriginal education has again been hot in recent months. Not only has Attawapiskat reminded the Canadian public of dire circumstances in First Nations communities, but the December 2011 *Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples* noted that “for over 35 years, numerous reports have documented the very serious problems with . . . the development of culturally-appropriate curriculum (yet) . . . very few of the proposed reforms have been implemented” (p 1). February’s *Report of the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve* found that the schooling of students in First Nations communities “does not adequately support their identity as First Nation peoples” (p 1). *The Interim Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, also released in February, called for attention to curriculum content on residential schools. Yatta Kanu’s *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum* (2011) profoundly problematizes the case that, even when “culturally-appropriate curriculum” is official policy, Indigenous students’ needs are not being met. It could not be more timely.

In Manitoba, as elsewhere, *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula* has been mandated for several years. Kanu’s work largely rests on the presentation of findings from a series of studies in Winnipeg conducted between 2002 and 2007 on the integration of Aboriginal cultural knowledge into public school curricula. Without a word chronicling the development of the specific policy giving rise to her subject, Kanu’s introductory chapter nevertheless discusses the broad historical context accounting for its development both politically and with reference to curriculum thinking.

Kanu’s second chapter, “Understanding the Integration of Aboriginal Perspectives Through Theory” develops the theoretical framework one can use to make sense of issues related to Aboriginal educational performance and the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. A rich discussion of sociocultural theories of learning and cognition is followed by a more limited review of “macro-structural” theories regarding “ethnic minority school success/failure” (p 40) and makes clear her attachment to theories associated with racism, antiracism and critical race theories. Kanu’s analysis goes beyond simple notions of cultural relevance or cultural competence in education—she argues that the belief that these approaches can improve Aboriginal student success “denies the historical and larger structural contexts in which those differences are embedded” (p 46). Kanu does not use Indigenous theorizing, nor

does she attend to reproduction or resistance theorizing. Despite her concern for theory, a number of important concepts are uncritically glossed over throughout the book, including cultural capital, culture of poverty, knowledge economy, knowledge society and educational achievement gap.

Chapter 3, “Cultural Mediators of Aboriginal Student Learning in the Formal School System” reports on a Kanu-led study conducted during the 2002/03 school year among Aboriginal high school social studies students to uncover how the students’ cultural lives influence their classroom learning. Nine “aspects” of the students’ home and community cultures are identified. Kanu also lists nine classroom-focused conclusions she draws from these findings. Kanu recognizes that “today’s context of educational standardization and test-driven accountability” (p 85) might limit the possibilities of a culturally appropriate pedagogy and notes that the identified cultural aspects are not necessarily specific to Aboriginal students.

“Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum: Layering at Five Levels of Classroom Practice” reveals Kanu’s findings from a two-year study conducted during the 2003–2005 school years in four Grade 9 classrooms in two inner-city high schools. The study contributes new knowledge about the impact of integrating “Aboriginal perspectives” and elements of cultural socialization upon Indigenous students’ school success. Integration at five levels of classroom practice was studied. Research found were (a) a paucity of classroom-usable, culturally relevant materials, (b) strong evidence of substantial help at home with school work, indicating that “a low-income background does not necessarily preclude involvement by Aboriginal families in the education of their children” (p 99) and (c) at the level of process and assessment, a direct conflict between authentic culturally relevant education on the one hand and outcome-based schooling on the other.

“Aboriginal School Success through Integration? Learning Opportunities and Challenges” extends the analysis of findings from the study discussed in the previous chapter to a discussion of the effects of integration on academic achievement, class attendance/participation and school retention for the students in the study. Kanu found that students in classrooms where “Aboriginal perspectives” were systematically and intensively introduced outperformed other students academically. Here, a table or chart would have been useful to emphasize her quantitative findings. Nevertheless, having empirical evidence to support the intuitive understanding held by many in

the field is important for progressive educators and policy-makers.

It is in this chapter that Kanu becomes deeply critical of the provision of schooling to Aboriginal students and their possible futures. After recognizing several ways in which many Aboriginal students’ social contexts partially determine their possibilities for school success, Kanu turns her gaze to contemporary schooling as an institution that limits possibilities of cultural congruence. For example, she argues that “the power differential between (Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies) and the Eurocentric education system . . . is so heavily weighted in favour of Eurocentrism . . . that it becomes a real challenge to teach for genuine cultural understanding, mutual respect, and social justice” (p 130). In making this charge, Kanu goes beyond mere radical rhetoric and concretely addresses a number of associated problems.

Kanu argues that not only do schools fail to strengthen cultural connectedness for Aboriginal students, but a kind of deculturalization takes place, in which students become, in a historical extension of residential schools, even more distant from their own cultures. She also argues, both astutely and correctly, that “an inordinate focus on in-school reforms . . . is dangerous and misleading because it draws attention away from the effects which social and economic reform may have” for achieving academic success (p 134).

Chapter Six, “Critical Elements of Instruction Influencing Aboriginal School Success” largely focuses on teacher characteristics that improve the possibility of successfully integrating Aboriginal perspectives through the implementation of a school curriculum.

Kanu’s undated one-year investigation of 10 teachers’ perspectives in three inner-city high schools on the integration of Aboriginal perspectives appears in the seventh chapter. The teachers expressed broad support for the mandated provincial initiative. However, the capacity to accomplish the mission was limited by teachers’ lack of knowledge, the exclusion of teachers from decision-making about integration, the lack of appropriate classroom-ready learning resources, lack of sustained support from administration, the contradiction between conventional schooling processes and some Aboriginal cultural protocols, and the dominant teaching ideologies held by the studied educators. The ultimate consequence was an incoherent approach to integration that was both disconnected from an authentic

comprehension of Aboriginal perspectives and infused with a number of unresolved tensions. Of significance to the issue of teachers as cultural brokers, it was the Aboriginal educator who was most far-reaching in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. Non-Aboriginal teachers utilized an add-on approach where the “curriculum remained largely Eurocentric” (p 174). Thus, Kanu found that “although there is an expressed openness to the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in the school curriculum, in practice little or no headway is being made,” indicating “a token commitment to integration” (pp 175–76).

Earlier in the text Kanu observed that public education has been undergoing a “neoliberalization” over time; however, she does not elaborate on what that means. One by-product of neoliberal education that has characterized Manitoba education for at least a decade (Henley and Young 2001) is the lack of funding for substitutes so teachers could avail themselves of professional development opportunities, for the publication of classroom-ready materials and for community-liaison workers. However, Kanu identifies problems outside political economy and critiques an education system that is both Eurocentric and institutionally racist. The standards of education need to be questioned when, as Kanu observes, teachers graduate from preservice programs without any ability to “locate and analyze Aboriginal issues within historical contexts” (p 185). A hierarchical status of knowledge in which, for example, elective Native Awareness courses are assigned 30 minutes per week of instructional time, while other courses are taught daily or two/three times a week for 50-minute periods is also a problem, as is the conditioned lukewarm support for integration on behalf of local school administrations. Kanu concludes the chapter with a number of concrete and achievable recommendations to improve the province’s capacity to deliver on its integration promises.

Kanu’s concluding chapter is her richest contribution to the possibilities for materially improving schooling chances for Aboriginal youth. In it, she

develops a new non-Eurocentric “reconceptualized” theory of curriculum that needs to transform both public and teacher education. While her theory is theoretically sophisticated, she also includes concrete, if perhaps wishful, ideas about how this transformation might be achieved.

Kanu’s book makes for useful reading not only for anyone seriously interested in improving education for Aboriginal students but also for those committed to a more enriching, progressive and humane education for all Canadian students. While the first pages of her work are somewhat dense, in general her flair for language, the careful and provocative chapter-ending questions, the use of subject voice, the breadth of the book’s themes and the balance of empirical research findings with theory make this a valuable textbook for appropriate classrooms. However, no book, or approach to research, can accomplish everything. Thus, it is no criticism of Kanu to state that a critical ethnography of Aboriginal education that exposes the dialectical relationship between the partially-determining social conditions of many Aboriginal students, the marginalizing and exclusionary practices and policies of schools and provinces, and the production of forms of resistance and survival within continuing Eurocentric schooling has yet to be written.

Also missing is a significant analysis of the content of the social studies resources the students and teachers used. Again, to wish for this is to ask for a different research project. Kanu’s achievement goes substantially beyond almost all treatments of Aboriginal education in Canada because of its unique attention to both theory and empirical research. We have here concrete evidence that sociocultural approaches to education are not only useful, but essential.

## Reference

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