Creating a New Space to Learn and Walk Together
First Nations Curriculum and Pedagogy

The Gallaugher Bequest Sponsored Churchill Fellowship to Study First Nations Curriculum and Pedagogy in New Zealand, Canada, the United States and Finland.

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Signed: Adam Grover
Dated: 2 October 2018
Key Words

- First Nations
- First Peoples
- Indigenous
- Aboriginal
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Identity
- Treaty
- Reconciliation
- School
- Teacher
- Learner
- Student
- Self-Determination
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Executive Summary

Over the last decade there has been an emerging realisation of the central role of education and educators in enhancing Australia’s ability to achieve meaningful reconciliation between Australia’s First and Second Nations. This report provides an overview of a Churchill Fellowship undertaken in May-June 2018 which seeks to address and affirm the contribution of education in an internationally comparative context. The Fellowship provided for a detailed examination of contemporary best practice in First Nations curriculum and pedagogy in New Zealand, the United States, Canada, and Finland. This report critically reviews the experiences of educators, policy makers, students and Indigenous peoples in New Zealand, Canada, the United States of America and Finland as they engage with challenges and successes of creating and sustaining First Nations voice and agency in classrooms, staffrooms, conference rooms, playgrounds and lecture halls. The report outlines the key elements of best practice in the four countries visited and further provides a specific set of specific recommendations as to how to reflect international best practice in First Nations education in Australia. The report finds that best practice falls within three domains:

1. Government commitment to First Nations peoples
2. A practical and funded commitment to the four pillars of First Nations education, the four pillars being:
   - Pillar One: Curriculum Reform
   - Pillar Two: School and Teacher Capacity Building
   - Pillar Three: Collaborative Partnerships with First Nations Families, Elders and Communities
   - Pillar Four: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
3. Societal Support for First Nations


This report will be distributed to Australian Educators in the field of First Nations Studies, will form the basis of a conference paper, as well as being forwarded to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). While this report stands alone, it should form the basis for further work in establishing explicit, measurable and attainable goals for improving Indigenous education reform in Australia. Specifically and more broadly as forming a modest, but important supporting mechanism to achieving makaratta, ‘the coming together after a struggle’.

Dr Adam Grover
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<td>New Zealand Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Glenys Hauit-Parapara Senior Manager, Curriculum Design and Assessment, Skye Kimura, Lead Adviser-Achievement, Professional Capability &amp; Leadership, &amp; colleagues</td>
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<td>15 May – 20 May</td>
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<td>Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, President’s Professor, Arizona State University. Glenn Morris, Founder and Director, Fourth World Centre for the Study of Indigenous Law and Politics, Steven Gullberg, Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, The University of Oklahoma, Jessa Rogers, Project Director – Indigenous Research and Education Strategy, University of New England</td>
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<td>Renee St Germain Senior. Policy Analyst, Education</td>
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<td>24 May</td>
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<td>Evelyn Wilson, Associate Director, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. University of Toronto.</td>
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<td>28 May</td>
<td>Ontario Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Eva Silva, Intergovernmental Advisor, Taunya Paquette, Director, Indigenous Education Office, Krishanthi Sivakunanatha, Senior policy advisor and Beena Kondopparamoil, Senior policy advisor, Indigenous Education</td>
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<td>28 May</td>
<td>Jennifer Farell-Cordon, Education Officer, Curriculum and Assessment</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Office, Indigenous Education and wellbeing Division</td>
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<td>Angela De Palma Chair of the Ontario College of Teachers &amp; colleagues</td>
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<td>Greg Scotchburn, Principal, Port Perry High School Coleen Hemphill,</td>
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<td>Chief Negotiator, Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Treaty Office &amp; colleagues</td>
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<td>30 May –1 June</td>
<td>Dr Bettina Schneider Associate Vice-President Academic and Dr Bob</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Kayses, Vice-President: Academic, Solomon Batt, Associate Professor,</td>
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<td>Department of Indigenous Languages, Arts &amp; Culture, Paula Daigle,</td>
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<td>Teaching and Learning Librarian, First Nations University. &amp; colleagues</td>
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<td>Laurie Meijer Dress, Chair First Nations Studies Department,</td>
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<td>Stephanie Duff, Professor Invertebrate Ecologist. and colleagues &amp;</td>
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<td>Ted Cadwallader, Provincial Director, Aboriginal Education &amp;</td>
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<td>18 June –21 June</td>
<td>Jacquelyn M. Cheek, Special Assistant to the Director</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>25-28 June</td>
<td>The Sami Cultural Centre SAJOS</td>
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“We are all here now and we have to solve our differences and live together as Australians... I will use the title you have honoured me with to bring the Australian people together... Together we can build a remarkable country, the envy of the rest of the world.”

Lowitja O’Donoghue. 1984 Australian of the Year. Inaugural Chairperson Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

“The time for pitting white against black, shame against pride, and one peoples history against another’s, has had its day. After nearly fifty years of deeply divisive debates over the country’s foundation and its legacy for Indigenous Australians, Australia stands at a crossroads – we must either make the commonwealth stronger and more complete through an honest reckoning with the past, or we must unmake the nation by clinging to triumphant narratives in which the violence inherent in the nation’s foundation is trivialised.”

Mark McKenna, Professor of History University of Sydney, Moment of Truth Quarterly Essay Issue 69. 2018.
We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners of lutruwita/trowunna (Tasmania) and as the enduring custodians of the lands, seas, air and waterways. I pay respect to Elders past and present.

I acknowledge and pay respect to the First Nations peoples, of New Zealand, Canada, the United States and Finland who welcomed me, shared with me their stories, their songlines and their striking insights into their world, their lives and their realities, and who let me see through their eyes. My work seeks to honour you and your families, bands, clans and nations.

I acknowledge the generous and far-sighted support of the Gallaugher family, whose bequest formed the financial basis for my Churchill Fellowship. Your investment in the Trust, its aims and purposes, is deeply felt and greatly appreciated.¹

Mr Tony Woodward, Tasmanian Department of Education was the spark for my application. He could see what I initially could not; that there was a need for us to better understand our own curriculum offerings in Aboriginal Studies by reference to that which is offered internationally. Dr Ken Price, a colleague and a Churchill Fellow, clarified and helped me distil my application and made me appreciate the unique opportunity of a Churchill Fellowship.

Jenny Burgess, Suzanne Pennicott-Jones and Mark Sivills of the Tasmanian Department of Education and Dr Rob McEwan, Headmaster, The Hutchins School, were kind enough to support my work and to readily appreciate its strategic importance both regionally and for Australia as a whole.

To my family, Joanna, Isobella and George, who could see the determined glint in my eye and who continued to provide the reason I persevered even when homesick and a little unsure; your love and resilience made it possible.

To my national colleagues, including Dr Shayne Breen, and international colleagues, educators, administrators, teachers and many others, thank you. Your insights, perspectives and prior learnings have made their way into my own work. I particularly wish to honour the rich contribution of Professor Henry Reynolds in shaping my thinking.

Finally, to those students in Tasmania, and elsewhere, who will be both challenged and confronted by the historical narrative and contemporary realities of First Nations peoples globally, I hope you use your new knowledge and understanding to remake, for the better, our collective relationship with Australian First Nations, so as to truly achieve makaratta.

Adam Grover, October 2018.

¹ The Gallaugher Bequest Churchill Fellowship is awarded in the field of education or a project with a Tasmanian focus. William Gallaugher was born in Ireland and was a doctor of medicine. He married Sybella (Sybil) Rankin from Queensland and moved to and retired in Tasmania in 1956 becoming a prominent Tasmanian citizen. William passed away in 1969 and was survived by Sybil until 1974. Upon her death their Estate was bequeathed to the Churchill Trust. For award to residents of Tasmania only. See: https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/sponsors/about/gallahger-bequest/
From my research in New Zealand, Canada, the United States and Finland, generously supported by the Churchill Trust, I find that there are three domains of success supported by three throughlines, which if implemented, will provide for enhanced outcomes in First Nations education in Australia.

**The Three Domains of First Nations Success**

1. **Government Commitment to First Nations Peoples**

   i. Active, public, bipartisan political support for the acknowledgement and advancement of First Nations language, culture and identity, as well as a practical political commitment to the economic, cultural and societal wellbeing of First Nations peoples, now and going forward.

   ii. An established, bipartisan, timely and successful process of political treaty making, which acts to practically and symbolically legitimise First Nations peoples – their history, and continuance, their identity, culture and languages, and which provides an essential element of, and gives rise to, a distinctive and successful Indigenous education program.

   iii. Active and sustained government support for Indigenous languages, in schools, in public discourse, government publications, in signage, and in nomenclature policy.

   iv. Explicit government bicultural policy. (Nation to Nation)

   v. Government legislation and constitutional reform which asserts First Nations existential and *a priori* rights, as Nations, as well as their historical and ongoing custodianship of land, sky, sea and waterways.

   vi. Explicit and public government acts of truth and reconciliation, apology, and atonement.

   vii. Specific and targeted support, including equitable governance and financial support, for Indigenous policy making, advocacy and social services provision, including, but not limited to, specific Indigenous educational organisations and structures.

   viii. Mandating First Nations Studies for all students in all schools as core content.

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2 While these domains might initially extend beyond the realm of education and into politics, I argue that without substantial movement on these policy domains the achievement of our educational goals, and most importantly, the strengthening of Australian student understanding and a practical commitment to makaratta, cannot be achieved.
2. A Practical and Funded Commitment to the Four Pillars of First Nations Education

**Pillar 1- Curriculum Reform**

- Honouring and embedding Indigenous forms of knowledge and ways of knowing and being in curriculum design.
- Curriculum co-constructed with Indigenous people and respecting Indigenous episteme, visions and goals of learning.
- Reflecting, supporting and including Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions.
- Socially transformative and constructed as an explicit and active form of decolonisation and social transformation.
- Configured so as to be a mechanism for truth-telling of a shared experience.
- Strongly interdisciplinary curriculum: not limited to only a historical narrative.
- The central importance of the introduction of an Australian Curriculum Senior Secondary course in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

**Pillar 2 – School and Teacher Capacity Building**

- Government support for well-funded and well-resourced schools which can engage with local communities and apply best practice First Nations curriculum and pedagogy.
- Enhancement of teacher and school leader professional knowledge and practice of and in Indigenous Nations, culture, languages and peoples.
- The utilisation and honouring of Indigenous educators in schools.
- Making mandatory Indigenous perspectives and knowledge as **core** content in pre-service and continuing teacher training.
- Embracing an inquiry -orientated, evidence based approach to teaching and learning, where teachers are given sufficient time, space and resources to focus and develop new professional learning and understandings and check and reflect on their new learning and practice against the differences made in improving Indigenous learner outcomes.
- Interdisciplinary and Indigenous teaching lead by Indigenous educators.
- Active school-based leadership in Indigenous learning.

**Pillar 3 – Collaborative Partnerships with First Nations Families, Elders and Communities**

- Collaboration and partnership with Indigenous communities, particularly in a local context.
- Supporting Indigenous knowledge-holders participation, agency and voice in classrooms.
- Integration of Indigenous practices and protocols within classrooms and staffrooms.
- Respect for wisdom and role of Elders and community members.
Pillar 4 – Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

- Indigenize, decolonise and democratise teaching and assessment.
- Cooperative, communal, intergenerational and experiential learning.
- Place-based education.
- The importance of yarning, storytelling, story sharing and songlines as forms of learning which reflects First Nations episteme.³
- Application of Indigenous epistemology.⁴
- Inquiry based learning.⁵
- Transformative teaching.
- Interdisciplinary studies.
- Promote excellence, accountability equity, and holistic student wellbeing in the context of their Indigenous identity.

3. Societal Support for First Nations

i. An active, resourced, informed and purposeful community dialogue on the historical narrative and contemporary experiences and interrelationship of First and Second Nations.

ii. Multilateral and multidimensional community engagement with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous non-government organisations, community organisations and First Nations advocates as well as acts of political and social activism which facilitate acts of reconciliation with and affirmation of First Nations peoples, cultures, languages and identities.

iii. A commitment by the academic and teaching community to active research in the field of First Nations, and its resultant dissemination and uptake within the wider community.

iv. A normative societal narrative of a shared history of First and Second Nations, which is reflective of the coming together of two valued, respected and responsible equal partners.


³ Episteme can be understood as knowledge, a system of understanding; specifically the body of ideas which shape the perception of knowledge in a particular period.

⁴ Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.

⁵ It is worth noting that one of the most successful educational systems in the world, the Finnish, is embracing Inquiry based learning as the basis of its teaching and learning practices see: Finland schools: Subjects scrapped and replaced with 'topics' as the country reforms its education system. See:

vi. A normalisation of fair, equitable and responsible media reporting of, and media representations of, First Nations peoples.

vii. A community willingness and engaged disposition towards achieving Makarrata; the coming together after a struggle.
Indigenous Success Throughlines

Underpinning these three domains are three Indigenous Success Throughlines which my research has concluded as being the foundational characteristics of enabled jurisdictions globally, without which First Nations educational reform cannot be substantially progressed nor, in the authors view, can makarrata be achieved in Australia.

Language

The practical revival, instruction in and practice of Indigenous language(s) is central to Indigenous identity and to First Nations revival and cultural continuance.

This is a precondition if makarrata is to be achieved in Australia.

Treaty

The most successful jurisdictions internationally are those which have substantially achieved Treaty with their First Nations. Treaties provide a common language of rights and responsibilities, creates a common narrative to consider the past, and a common approach for all peoples to respectfully walk together in the future and to collectively make things right.

This is a precondition if makarrata is to be achieved in Australia.

Restitution

There are three elements of Restitution. Firstly, a constitutional acknowledgment of the a priori sovereignty of Indigenous peoples as national groups, and as nations, their original and ongoing relationship to Country. Secondly, Restitution means a formal Nation to Nation recognition and acknowledgement of past events in the form of apologies, truth and reconciliation process and resultant calls to action to deal with historical and contemporary injustice. Thirdly, Restitution means practical steps taken by governments to achieve the restoration of First Nations rights over lands, property, genetic remains, culture, education, economic resources and a meaningful pathway to self-determination.

Within the framework of Restitution we also observe the commonality of exemplar states (New Zealand and Canada) providing for Constitutional recognition of First Peoples and their protection under a form of a Bill of Rights.

These elements are preconditions if makarrata is to be achieved in Australia.

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6 Such as has occurred in Canada through its Truth and Reconciliation Commission See: Reconciliation Canada at: http://reconciliationcanada.ca/
Executive Summary of Key Findings II

Exemplars of Indigenous Best Practice Relevant to Educational Practice

The following comments provide a precis of the best of First Nations educational practice across the four jurisdictions visited by the author as part of the Churchill Fellowship. Where relevant they include the political, social, economic and institutional responses to First Nations which have been demonstrated to enhance educational engagement and achievement.

New Zealand

- A genuine political and societal commitment to biculturalism7
- A Māori-Medium (school) Curriculum (Kura Kaupapa Māori) / Te Marautanga o Aotearoa designed for and by Māori, encouraging Māori ways of knowing and being deeply embedded within it both in terms of content and pedagogy
- A Māori centred approach to educational intervention – Kaupapa Māori Theory
- An English Medium Curriculum – with ample opportunity for learners to engage with Māori language, history and current realities
- A whole of Government explicit commitment, demonstrated in policy and practice, to Māori wellbeing, identity, language and ways of knowing and being across all agencies and additionally a well-resourced and potent Ministry of Māori Development.
- A whole of government affirmation of the importance of Māori rights as being intrinsically linked to the country’s commitment to Human Rights. (Embodied in part in New Zealand’s 1990 Bill of Rights and New Zealand's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.)
- A Treaty as well as a Waitangi Treaty Tribunal to achieve public forms of restitution.
- Communal and political acceptance that ‘The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi’ (Te Wairua o Waitangi) are to be directly and equally applicable to all government decision as well as the conduct of government agencies
- A Higher Education sector committed to preparing teachers to teach with, for and through Māori exemplified by the work of Te Kotahitanga.8

Canada

- A modern Canadian National Constitution which recognises Canada’s First Nations

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7 While there are numerous examples of New Zealand’s commitment biculturalism, two stand out. New Zealand’s public signage policy is universally both English and Maori, and the recent birth of the Prime Minister’s first child with both Maori and European references in her name: Neve Te Aroha Ardern Gayford it means, in various forms, bright and radiant and snow, Aroha in Maori means love and Te Aroha is also the name of a mountain near where Ms Ardern's family come from.

8 The importance of the work of Te Kotahitanga as a research institute for improving Maori engagement in education is difficult to overstate. see: [http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About](http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About)
• A Charter of Rights and Freedoms as part of the Canadian 1982 Constitution - both instruments affirming and securing Canada’s indigenous rights, including land rights
• A modern, extensive and respected national treaty system
• An interventionist and activist judicial system with notable judgments providing for reforms – particularity around land tenure and use-favouring First Nations
• A comprehensive examination of the role and status and ongoing challenges of First Nations peoples as a result of the Canadian 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
• A Truth and Reconciliation Commission arising out of the Residential School failings, with specific ‘Calls to Action’ regarding the extension of Indigenous education for both First Nations and non-Indigenous students throughout the Canadian education system. (The Calls to Action being considered core business for Canadian government agencies.)
• At the provincial level, highly detailed and comprehensive engagement strategies with First Nations peoples on educational matters, actionable and well-resourced and structured at the district and school level
• Comprehensive curriculum reform resulting in modern curriculum to include First Nations history, culture and worldview into all classrooms, which adopts a pedagogy reflective of Indigenous world views and the affirmation for First Nations as custodians of their own knowledge
• A higher education system engaged in native studies as well as requirements for teacher training course to include mandatory indigenous content.

United States of America

• The establishment of a stand-alone Federal agency responsible for the development of First Nations schools and the education of First Nations students more generally
• Direct Federal funding of First Nations schools; both on and off reserves
• A Nation to Nation relationship between federally registered tribes and the national government
• Indigenous schools, both on and off reserves, with the autonomy to set and teach their own curriculum their own way
• Extensive treaties as well as significant legislative reforms to undo past wrong doing as well as progressively ensuring and respecting First Nations autonomy, sovereignty and (partial) control over lands.

Scandinavia

• A degree of Indigenous political autonomy – sufficient to provide for autonomy in decision making regarding the education of Sámi. This is in the form of the three Sámi Parliaments, (Norway, Sweden and Finland) which allows for nation to
nation representation as well as local autonomy and funding for the prioritisation and provision for Sámi educational programmes and outcomes

- Strong, targeted and specific programmes run in Sámi regions specifically for Sámi learners, in particular in Sámi primary schools and in the provision of targeted vocational learning in areas relevant to Sámi such as Reindeer herding, artefact production and the media
- Indigenous language acquisition a high priority in Sámi schools; universal in Sámi primary schools, and which is supported by Sámi radio services in the four Sámi languages
- An active media landscape in and for Sámi, large number of Indigenous publications as well as electronic media
- Higher educational buy in to Sámi research, teacher preparation and affirmation of Sámi culture, continuance and identity
- An unambiguous educational commitment to Sámi for the Sámi – that is educational relevant to first nations’ peoples, developed and delivered locally to them though a Sámi created and mediated curriculum.
Background- and Context: The Centrality of the Treaty of Waitangi

The New Zealand (NZ) commitment to First Nations education is substantial and reflects the very close relationship between education, culture and society in the country. It is predicated upon the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand’s founding document, which was signed on 6 February 1840. 9 It was meant to be a partnership between Māori and the British Crown. Although it was intended to create unity, different understandings of the treaty, and breaches of it, have caused conflict within the country. From the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 meaningful efforts to honour the treaty and its principles expanded, particularly in relation to land tenure, however this has expanded to influence all aspects of Government policy, and its relationship to First Nations, including educational policy. Accordingly the context in which the New Zealand Government frames its education policy in relation to Māori education is influenced by a number of guiding principles one of which is the treaty. The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa/New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge

of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. This will be discussed further below. Suffice to say as I was reminded, the Treaty provides the backbone for Maori engagement and policy in all aspects of education pursuits in New Zealand.

**Educational context**

There are three underpinning ideas which position New Zealand curriculum, in a way which validates and is inclusive of Indigenous peoples and which differs from the Australian experience. These are *Identity, Language and Culture*. The NZ curricula are specifically designed to be inclusive, this means it is a curriculum which not only takes account of gender and ethnicity, diversity of ability and learning needs, family structure and religion, socio-economic status and religion. It forms a curriculum which is founded in Māori values and principles, ways of knowing and being and which is designed to develop mutually positive relationships between Maori and non-Maori.

**New Zealand’s three Curricula**

In New Zealand there are three curricula.

- Te Whariki – early childhood curriculum
- The New Zealand Curriculum – for English medium schools
- Te Marautanga o Aotearoa – for Māori medium schools.\(^{10}\)

The three curricula have similar visions for young people.

**Background**

As detailed by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the vision for every New Zealander:

- Is strong in their national and cultural identity
- Aspires for themselves and their children to achieve more
- Has the choice and opportunity to be the best they can be
- Is an active participant and citizen in creating a strong civil society
- Is productive, valued and competitive in the world.\(^{11}\)

**Principles**

The principles set out below embody beliefs about what is important and desirable in New Zealand’s school curriculum. They underpin New Zealand school decision making.

These principles, according to the New Zealand Ministry of Education, put students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should ‘experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand’s identity.\(^ {12}\)

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\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
Although similar, the principles and the values have different functions. The principles relate to how curriculum is formalised in New Zealand schools; they are particularly relevant to the processes of planning, prioritising, and review. The values are part of the everyday curriculum – “encouraged, modelled, and explored”.13

In New Zealand it is explicitly planned that all curriculum should be consistent with the following eight statements:

**High Expectations**

The curriculum supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their individual circumstances.

**Treaty of Waitangi**

The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa/New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

**Cultural Diversity**

The curriculum reflects New Zealand’s cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people.

**Inclusion**

The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students’ identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed.

**Learning to learn**

The curriculum encourages all students to reflect on their own learning processes and to learn how to learn.

**Community Engagement**

The curriculum has meaning for students, connects with their wider lives, and engages the support of their families, whānau14, and communities.

**Coherence**

The curriculum offers all students a broad education that makes links within and across learning areas, provides for coherent transitions, and opens up pathways to further learning.

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13 Ibid.
14 An extended family or community of related families who live together in the same area.
Future Focus

The curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation.15

New Zealand’s curriculum can be broken into two parts:

The national curriculum covers subjects that are taught at primary and secondary schools and the standards students should reach in each subject.

Schools that teach in the English language use the New Zealand Curriculum. Schools that teach in the Māori language use Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (a curriculum based on Māori philosophies).

Māori-medium education (Kura Kaupapa Māori)

Māori medium education is where students are taught all or some curriculum subjects in the Māori language for at least 51 percent of the time.

Māori language in English medium is where students are learning Te Reo Māori as a language subject, or are taught curriculum subjects in the Māori language for up to 50 % of the time.

The holistic nature of Māori curriculum is best encapsulated in the following:

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini.

I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe, and ancestors.

Theorising about First Nations Curriculum in New Zealand

Underpinning the New Zealand Curriculum are a number of educational theories which support curriculum development. These being particularly useful in understanding New Zealand’s approach to First Nations education.

Bioecological Model

Children’s learning is located within the nested contexts and relationships of family, community and wider local, national and global influences. Kaiko (Teachers) participate in, and may influence, some or all of these contexts.

Education theorist Urie Bronfenbrenner explains this process through his ecological systems model. An aligned system, focused on children’s wellbeing and development, is conducive to learning. In the New Zealand context, implementing curriculum (any one of the three) means that teachers will work with others within and beyond their specific context to enact the curriculum. Working together across the whole system in an extension on the Family and Community (Whanau/Tangata principle). An example of Bronfenbrenner’s theory in action can be seen in the ways teachers in New Zealand respond to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). Teachers work to uphold and protect children’s rights.

interests and points of view from the earliest ages. They recognise children as citizens and preserve their dignity while building their mana (respect/prestige) and supporting them to build the mana of others.”

Sociocultural Theories

Sociocultural theories taken from Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, who researched learning processes taking into account of the cognitive and critical historical perspectives.

These ideas suggest that learning takes place in relationships with people, places and things, mediated in valued social and cultural activities. In this framework, play, social interaction and interaction with others are important to the ways in which they try out new roles and identities and thus learn. Teachers need to understand the artefacts, materials and tools of culture and

symbols and societies and cultures to most fully facilitate learning. This theoretical approach has direct relevance to the implementation of First Nations curriculum and in particular pedagogy.

The most important theoretical dimension which impacts on the construction and implementation of First Nations education in New Zealand is:

**Kaupapa Māori Theory**

Kaupapa Māori theory is drawn from Māori ways of knowing and being and assumes the normalcy of Māori knowledge, language and culture. It gives voice to Māori aspirations and expresses the ways in which Māori aspirations, ideas and learning practices can be framed and organised. It is an affirmation of Māori ways of knowing and being and provides the backbone of Māori curriculum in New Zealand.

The key elements or principals of Kaupapa Māori research are outlined here:\(^17\):

**Tino Rangatiratanga - The Principle of Self-determination**

Tino Rangatiratanga relates to sovereignty, autonomy, control, self-determination and independence. The notion of Tino Rangatiratanga asserts and reinforces the goal of Kaupapa Māori initiatives: allowing Māori to control their own culture, aspirations and destiny.

**Taonga Tuku Iho - The Principle of Cultural Aspiration**

This principle asserts the centrality and legitimacy of Te Reo Māori, Tīkanga and Mātauranga Māori. Within a Kaupapa Māori paradigm, these Māori ways of knowing, doing and understanding the world are considered valid in their own right. In acknowledging their validity and relevance it also allows spiritual and cultural awareness and other considerations to be taken into account.

**Ako Māori - The Principle of Culturally Preferred Pedagogy**

This principle acknowledges teaching and learning practices that are inherent and unique to Māori, as well as practices that may not be traditionally derived but are preferred by Māori.

**Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga - The Principle of Socio-Economic Mediation**

This principle asserts the need to mediate and assist in the alleviation of negative pressures and disadvantages experienced by Māori communities. This principle asserts a need for Kaupapa Māori research to be of positive benefit to Māori communities. It also acknowledges the

\(^{17}\) See Principles of Kaupapa Māori - [http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/27/](http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/27/)
relevance and success that Māori derived initiatives have as intervention systems for addressing socio-economic issues that currently exist.

**Whānau - The Principle of Extended Family Structure**

The principle of Whānau sits at the core of Kaupapa Māori. It acknowledges the relationships that Māori have to one another and to the world around them. Whānau, and the process of whakawhanaungatanga are key elements of Māori society and culture. This principle acknowledges the responsibility and obligations of the researcher to nurture and care for these relationships and also the intrinsic connection between the researcher, the researched and the research.

**Kaupapa - The Principle of Collective Philosophy**

The 'Kaupapa' refers to the collective vision, aspiration and purpose of Māori communities. Larger than the topic of the research alone, the Kaupapa refers to the aspirations of the community. The research topic or intervention systems therefore are considered to be an incremental and vital contribution to the overall 'Kaupapa'.

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi - The Principle of the Treaty of Waitangi**

Pihama identified another principle to be taken into account within Kaupapa Māori theory: Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) is a crucial document which defines the relationship between Māori and the Crown in New Zealand. It affirms both the tangata whenua status of whānau, hapū and iwi in New Zealand, and their rights of citizenship. The Tiriti therefore provides a basis through which Māori may critically analyse relationships, challenge the status-quo, and affirm the Māori rights.

**Ata - The Principle of Growing Respectful Relationships**

The principle of āta, was developed primarily as a transformative approach within the area of social services. The principle of āta relates specifically to the building and nurturing of relationships. It acts as a guide to the understanding of relationships and wellbeing when engaging with Māori.

| **Ata focuses on our relationships, negotiating boundaries, working to create and hold safe space with corresponding behaviours.** |
| **Ata gently reminds people of how to behave when engaging in relationships with people, kaupapa and environments.** |
| **Āta intensifies peoples' perceptions in the following areas.** |
It accords quality space of time (wā) and place (wāhi).
It demands effort and energy of participants.
It conveys the notion of respectfulness.
It conveys the notion of reciprocity.
It conveys the requirement of reflection, the prerequisite to critical analysis.
It conveys the requirement of discipline.
It ensures that the transformation process is an integral part of relationships.
Āta incorporates the notion of planning.
Āta incorporates the notion of strategizing.\(^\text{18}\)

The practical implementation of this within New Zealand Schools as the foundational theoretical element of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, means that Māori have access to a distinct and contextualized curriculum situated within and an expression of the land, culture, history and identity of Māori and which is driven by close involvement from whanau (the extended family), hapu (tribe or sub-tribe) and iwi. (Extended kinship group, Māori people)\(^\text{19}\)

From this, and based on conversation with policy practitioners I argue that:

*Providing a Māori-centred curriculum is not seen as a transactional or instrumental process by which Māori reach (White) achievement and engagement standards (as it might be seen in Australia) but rather as the fulfilment of a more basic human right for (Māori) students to be educated in a way that reflects their own world view.*

\(^{18}\) Source: [http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/27/](http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/27/)

The innovative integration of Māori ways of knowing and being into the school curriculum in New Zealand is exemplified in the annual Waka Ama championships. In March each year on Lake Tīlitapu teenage students from across New Zealand compete in the National Secondary School Waka Ama Championships.

The championships showcase the Polynesian tradition of outrigger canoe racing. Importantly the event demonstrates and affirms Indigenous ways of being and culture in a form of applied learning which is physically demanding, fun and importantly is recognised as a component party of formal leaning sequences. Students learn and participate in an Indigenous tradition with deep historical roots, additionally, in order to prepare to participate students learn water safety skills, financial literacy and project management skills which are recognised in the formal New Zealand education system.

Accordingly this event is an excellent example of New Zealand’s curriculum in incorporating strands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learning in a way which respects and celebrates Māori culture and ways of being, while additionally stretching and extending student engagement with Indigenous forms of learning in a challenging and experiential way.

The role of Te Kotahitanga in New Zealand

Te Kotahitanga is a New Zealand research and professional development programme that:

- Supports teachers to improve Māori students' learning and achievement, enabling teachers to create a culturally responsive context for learning which is responsive to evidence of student performance and understandings
• Enables school leaders, and the wider school community, to focus on changing school structures and organisations to more effectively support teachers in this endeavour.\textsuperscript{20}

All New Zealand schools are evaluated explicitly and publicly on Māori achievement and their efforts to improve it. Many have raised Māori achievement with reference to an Effective Teaching Profile developed by the Māori led Te Kotahitanga research and teacher professional development project. Its six presumptions are that:

• Teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings above all else
• Teachers care for the performance of their students
• Teachers are able to create a secure, well-managed learning environment
• Teachers are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori
• Teachers can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners
• Teachers promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievement for Māori students.\textsuperscript{21}

Results

This graph shows an impressive increase in the proportion of Year 11 students attaining NCEA\textsuperscript{22} for the first cohort involved in Te Kotahitanga (2006) relative to the one before (2005), and that this increase was substantially larger than the average 2005 - 2006 increase at decile-matched comparison schools.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chart.png}
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\textsuperscript{20} See: Te Kotahitanga, New Zealand Ministry of Education: \url{http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/}
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} New Zealand National Certificate of Educational Achievement. (NCEA) of which there are three levels.
The effectiveness of the programme in engaging Māori learners is summed up in the following quote from a New Zealand teacher:

“After 16 years of teaching, my whole approach to teaching has been transformed by participation in this programme and the support provided by the school’s facilitation team. Māori students in my classes are achieving at levels consistent with and in some cases above New Zealand national means. The disparity between Māori and non-Māori achievement is quickly disappearing and students love coming to Mathematics classes.”

The Three pillars of New Zealand Education for First Nations Peoples

As suggested earlier in this part of the report, it is impossible to think about Education in New Zealand for and with Māori without considering the centrality of its three pillars – Identity, Language and Culture.

As the New Zealand Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Curriculum states:

Learner Identity is enhanced when children’s home languages are valued in educational settings and when kaiako are responsive to their ways of knowing and being. For Māori this means kaiako (teacher/instructor) need understanding of a world view that emphasises the child’s whakapapa connection to Māori creation across Te Kore (Māori concept of void/potentiality), te pot e ao marama atua Māori (the Māori concept of existence and coming into being) and tipuna (ancestors).

Indigenous education in New Zealand is acknowledged as taking place in multidimensional domains. These comprise the cognitive (hinengaro) Physical (tinana) emotional (whatumanawa) spiritual (wairua) and cultural dimensions. These views need to be thought of holistically as closely interwoven and interdependent. For Māori the spiritual dimension is fundamental to holistic development because it connects the other dimensions across time and space.

This multidimensional process takes a distinctive metaphorical form in New Zealand, represented by the whariki, the woven mat of the Māori, which links knowledge, skill and time.

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23 Source: http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About/Results-and-Findings

Accordingly the concept of ‘the weaving’ of the principles and strands, the values, key competences and learning areas of the curriculum is emphasised, as is the relationship between family, student, school and teachers as weaving together a complete and seamless support structure for learners. It is a mode of holistic development of the self, wrapped in and supported by family, community, curriculum and values and principles – it appears a robust model and conceptually a foundational element of education New Zealand, and is strongly reflective of and honours Māori ways of knowing and being.

Curriculum flexibility in New Zealand

The extent to which students engage with New Zealand/Māori history of colonisation and war is dependent upon individual schools.

A key focus for New Zealand education is Māori identity, language and self determination

Language development and language policy is at the heart of Māori education
The Māori-medium education Māori is designed to immerse students (both Māori and non-Māori in a cultural immersive experience)

Māori Māori – Additional reflections

- Teachers in the Māori schools must demonstrate a high level of Māori language and culture proficiency, but are not required to be Māori themselves.
- Tracking education outcomes between English and Māori medium schools, learners are getting the same level of achievement.
- The control and mastery of language by Māori is considered a unique feature of NZ education.
- In curriculum design, the input of indigenous stakeholders is considered of the highest importance.
- There is a key value in making explicit Māori ways of knowing and being.
- Important to avoid system bias – by not allowing curriculum design which is informed by key Māori stakeholders.
- There are four Ministers for Māori and the provision of Māori services is a key government commitment in areas which include education as well as housing, social welfare and a very strong and explicit focus on equity.
- Each New Zealand school has choice in the degree it provides for Māori curriculum and cultural immersion, students and parents then can choose between schools. It is however possible that a school could get by without the provision of any Māori education.
- Teacher competency in Māori matters is an ongoing challenge, recruiting and retaining expert teachers is difficult. Developing cultural competency is still a work in progress for NZ Ministry of Education.
- Contemporary efforts are being made by the Ministry of Education to build and sustain cultural competencies amongst teachers.
- There is a strong focus on not letting teachers down in respect to Māori cultural immersion.
- Building family and ancestral linkages is a critical part of successfully engaging with Māori students.
- There is increasingly resource allocation to explicitly supporting teachers in professional learning in Māori and Māori curriculum.
- Key Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) in Māori advocacy in New Zealand include:
  - Iwi Leaders Forum
  - Māori Caucus
  - Māori Elders.
- All policy, legislation and government decisions regarding Māori and Māori education are predicated and find their foundations in the Treaty. Without the treaty the steps taken to advance, protect and promote Māori would not have occurred.
- There is no specific curriculum references to colonisation and decolonisation, rather there is an affirmation of Māori Language, culture and Identity, from this framework
individual schools, mediated by their Boards of Trustees, develop curriculum best suited to their community, their community (Māori) tribe and families. Thus it is possible that no two curriculum offerings will look the same, when within Māori – mediated schools. The focus on connections to each other, to culture and language is the element which links the curriculum, not the specific content of what is taught.

- Māori studies are a feature of university level teaching and learning but is not comparative in nature in high schools.
- Importantly Māori can undertake further studies in Māori Medium Higher Education institutions in New Zealand in files including Māori studies, law, ICT and other disciplines.
- In New Zealand evidence suggests that it has proven difficult to broaden and deepen Māori studies of history and culture in non-Māori schools given the autonomy of English medium schools to largely set their own curriculum aims, objectives and content.
- School leadership, particularly in Māori-mediated schools, is what determines what is taught, this is not done in isolation but involves tribes, families and Māori elders.
- Unlike in Tasmania there is no central facilitation for Māori to visit or support Māori education in English Mediated schools. The extent of Māori engagement by Mari family and elders in schools is reliant upon the relationships built up by schools and teachers, this is not a common experience in English-medium schools.
- A live debate in New Zealand at the time of writing was the introduction of mandatory te Reo Māori in all schools in order to validate the treaty and to make real the commitment to biculturalism. This, at time of writing, has just been agreed to. Thus will, given the hitherto optional nature of engagement with Māori culture, language and identity in English-medium schools, be both a practical step forward to meeting the aims of the Treaty as well as a more real reflection for indigenous and non-indigenous New Zealanders of common values and the partnership between the two peoples, and this then reflects New Zealand’s broader commitments to the renewed legal status given to the Treaty of Waitangi from 1975. New Zealand Government agencies have been increasingly required to be bicultural - that is, to fairly represent Māori and non-Māori interests in their operations and their allocation of resources, including education.

**Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development)**

Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development) is a comparatively small agency with around 200 staff members, however its strength lies in its strong regional representation and in particular in the unique role it has in administering the Māori Community Development Act 1962. (The Act)

The Act is pivotal in supporting Māori as it provides for the establishment of Māori representative bodies, in particular the Māori committees as well as the establishment and function of Māori Wardens. The Committees, reporting to district councils provide a conduit for matters of concert to Māori, such as housing, economics relations, social matters and policing to be heard and acted upon via a formal and established channel supporting and reflecting this is the role of the Māori Wardens who provide a tangible level of support to local
Māori communities in particular as a mediating force between Iwi and the police force. These Wardens, all volunteers are formally trained and given a government warrant. Their work vair from community support, traffic management and provide support to Māori families. Importantly they are highly respected within NZ Māori society (have a high degree of ‘mana’25)

Māori Television

Te Reo Whakapuaki Irirangi - Their role is to promote Māori language and culture by making funds available for broadcasting and production.

Te Tumu Paeroa - The main services offered to owners of Māori land are:

• trust administration
• property management
• distribution of income, grants and scholarships
• developing business ventures based on the land
• client fund management
• Sir Apirana Ngata Māoriorial scholarships.

The agency sees its role in building capacity, agency and aspiration in Māori

Building upon the work of the Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development) see their role as providing the three building blocks of Māori in NZ that is culture, identity and perhaps most importantly, Language.

Their role is unique in that they are entirely Māori and act as mediators between Government and Iwi, and build partnerships between the two.

Language is centrally important, it was described as such:

‘Language is our pathway into our world of knowing ‘

The agency is particularly close relationship with the Ministry of Education in so far as the adoption of the Māori-medium curriculum (Te Marautanga o Aotearoa), and its explicit focus on the promotion of Māori ways of being and knowing, affirms Māori culture and identity. Importantly this curriculum provides the same pathways and achievement standard for Mario as they exit compulsory education

There work, as advocates for Mar, is in part made easier as the NZ population is approximately 15% of the nation’s population and as a unity, a voting bloc, represent a significant voting bloc, which governments ignore at their (electoral) peril.

It was noteworthy that while there exists a specific Māori-medium curriculum that the majority of Māori students are not in Māori schools, further that English-medium schools were not obliged to introduce Mario/newcomer history as an integral part of their teaching and learning

25 Mana is a centrally important concept in New Zealand it means the status or respect an individual enjoys
programs. Accordingly I was reminded again that it is possible for students to participate in English-medium schools and not to encounter, consider or appreciate first and second nation history, nor to consider the place of Māori in contemporary New Zealand society.

Dr Adam Grover with staff of Te Puni Kokiri (New Zealand Ministry of Māori Development)

Overall impressions New Zealand

It is not possible to talk about the position of First nation’s education in New Zealand without some limited evaluation of the place of national identity in the narrative of educational reform.

New Zealand’s national identity, as in Canada and Australia, is not fully formed. On one hand concepts of ethnic identity – of the identity of Māori based on the three pillars of Culture Identity and Language is strong, when it suits the political elites for it to be positioned prominently, and where considered opportune to do so, is appropriated by the central Government. When it is not convenient or when New Zealand looks to the wider world, (as in Australia) a less genuine and authentic form of civic identity is offered up as New Zealand’s defining characteristics. Factors such as respect for human rights, diversity, pluralism and equality are seen as central to its identity, which in turn acts to negate the First Nations Identity. As they become just one more voice in civil society. This paradox, as mentioned, is similarly experienced in other colonising states, such as Canada and Australia. This makes First Nations
education a little more complex and difficult for students and teachers to navigate, as its
purpose and location in the historical and contemporary narrative of the state is political
conditioned and always mediated by the politics of the day.

In New Zealand education is valued not as a means, or as an instrument of improving Māori
engagement and achievement alone, but foremost it is seen as an a priori human right which
Māori have to be educated in and through their language and in a manner which is intimately
linked to Māori ways of being and knowing. It is an assertion and a confirmation of a basic
human right.

Educational outcomes for Māori participating in Māori medium schools are no less than those
in English–medium schools. For boys the outcomes are actually stronger. It is argued that this
results from the specific indigenous pedagogy and worldviews employed.

All educational actions in New Zealand are begun in discussion with Māori, documents are
written by or with Māori as is policy and curriculum, it appears inconceivable that Māori would
not be the first and the last voice heard and listened to in matters to do with Government policy,
including education which is targeted for Māori.

The New Zealand government has made a significant, long term commitment to full integration
of Māori voice in its deliberative and decision making pieces, this is readily apparent in
education, in particular the investment in the Māori Curriculum, (Te Marautanga o Aotearoa)
which is similar in content but explicitly focus on Māori ways of being and knowing.
Increasing focus is being placed on the mandatory introduction of Te reo Māori in all New
Zealand Schools, and this will be an interesting development to monitor. Particularly as
detailed above, in English-medium schools the engagement with Māori history, culture
language and identity is optional and in some cases completely accidental. The New
Zealanders’ seen much more at home with their past and with themselves, as New Zealanders.
There is an absence of the edginess that seems to pervade the political narrative in Australia in
relation to Indigenous matters. Bilingualism is a given, as is the ongoing and unfinished
business of making the relationship work between first and second nations. An interesting
insight on a video from a former New Zealand judge on display at the New Zealand National
Library, that while there is an acknowledgment that terrible things had been doe, it was
‘wonderful to be part of a generation that had made settlements under the Treaty, and that this
had lifted a weight of ‘moral distress’.

While we, in Australia, talk of the ‘silence’ of the Aboriginal voice26 and have a history of ill-
formed and often suspicious and sometimes hostile narrative in Australia towards Indigenous
Australians, this is largely overcome in New Zealand, that is to say they are addressing, to a
greater or lesser degree the challenges we are still, as a community to face up to. The Treaty of
Waitangi and the work of the Waitangi Tribunal as with the all-pervasive attention to Māori

26 The concept of the Great Australian Silence in ration to Aboriginal affairs is derived from the pivotal 1968
Boyer Lectures given by W.E.H. Stanner. See: https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/C695416 and
https://www.auspsa.org.au/sites/default/files/reconciliation_and_the_great_australian_silence_andrew_guns
tone.pdf
matters in Government decision making by government and government agencies have made a significant difference. In my view the duel naming policy alone suggest the normalisation of Māori reconciliation with newcomers, and is positive and noteworthy.

There are real limitations in New Zealand, notwithstanding the very impressive commitments to First Nations education. It’s Important to note that its curriculum is not comparative and does not consider the experience of Māori with those of other First Nations in an international context. 27

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27 It was a distinctive honour to begin and conclude my meeting with staff of Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development) beyond the sharing of insights and comparative experience what made the meeting particularly special was the waiata (Māori song) which began and drew to a close the proceedings. What a rich and respectful way to meet and something I will never forget.
The United States of America in Detail

Dates Visited: 16-19 May (Los Angeles) and 16-21 June (Washington D.C.), 2018

_This hand is not the colour of yours, but if you pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. God made us both._

Standing Bear (Chief) c1829-1908

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference

Los Angeles 16-19 May 2018

Image Source: https://www.aisc.ucla.edu/naisa2018/img/NAISA%20logo%20transparent.png

Context

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) is an interdisciplinary, international membership-based organisation, comprised of scholars working in the fields of Native American and Indigenous Studies.

NAISA began through meetings hosted by the University of Oklahoma in 2007 and by the University of Georgia in 2008, incorporated in 2009, and has since become the major international and interdisciplinary professional organisation for scholars, graduate students, independent researchers, and community members interested in all aspects of Indigenous Studies.

In 2018, a very broad range of papers were presented, notably focused in the Higher Education sector and with a subdued focus on teaching and learning and pedagogy in a senior school environment, however there were a wide range of insightful and relevant papers and arguments offered which are summarised below.
NAISA Key Findings

Summary of Conference Key Findings

Pre-conference day (hosted at UCLA)

- Indigenous education exists ‘Wherever it exists’ – it is both formal and informal and relationship dependent.
- Relationship-based pedagogies are a focus, as this reflects Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- Importance of Indigenous family based teaching for resilience and perseverance – not just literacy and numeracy.
- Telling and sharing stories—especially telling stories about enduring challenges—is an integral part of Indigenous education and of building connections between generations of indigenous students.
- Sharing stories of indignity – the power of intergenerational learning.
- Knowledge should not be disconnected from relationships and community and the knowledge which resides and is held in custodianship by those relationships and community.
- Storying – two way reciprocal conversations, shared knowledge is located in the building of relationships, and in the building of knowledge.
- Indigenous learning – an important mechanism to overcome the limitations of mainstream schools.
- Indigenous knowledge, is essentially discursive. It is important that a number of voices are heard, built upon and sustains community and relationships and reflects indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- Learning about things which are relevant to First Nations and their lives should be the starting point in educational practice.
- It was argued that it is important to resist and refuse non-Indigenous stereotypes, and to affirm some central truths, including:
  - We still exist
  - We are not all ‘on welfare’ or ‘lazy’
  - We are not all alcoholics
  - We want to teach Native American contribution to society as well as indigenous local knowledge.
- Indigenous history being dismissed by traditional teaching practices was suggested as being the norm in US schools – approach characterised by the view “so here it is - let’s move on.”
- The paradox: The focus on ancient history and European wars in schools in a European context which delegitimise the historical experience of First Nations and their peoples.

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28 It should be noted that these comments are summaries of my notes and are left in this format to emphasise the urgency and intensity of the papers given at the conference.
• Importance of curriculum writing as a tool in order to write a history of indigenous peoples – it becomes a force and motivating factor in determining which history a society wishes to validate it.

• There is a high level of need for qualified, educated teachers in Indigenous studies. Many parts of the United States education system is struggling to find such staff. Importance of Indigenous parental involvement in developing the basic learnings in the curriculum, as well as getting Higher Education to train teachers in Indigenous studies.

• Problem of ‘inch-deep mile wide’ curriculum. A key priority which is still to be addressed in ensuring teachers are prepared to deal with Indigenous courses.

• Indigenising the curriculum – vitally important.

• Western education systems and curriculum are seen as sustaining power systems in which keep indigenous peoples ‘invisible’.

• Funding in the US is very decentralised – different school districts will fund Indigenous programs very differently, leading to very different results.

• The value of critical race analysis / theory was stressed

• The ‘law’ – who has the power to make, uphold and promulgate the law – not indigenous people.

• Importance of using a model for implementation of First Nations curriculum into classrooms, which stresses:
  • Teachers understanding of the policy underpinning the curriculum
  • Curriculum familiarity
  • Teachers knowledge and skills needed for implementation (including requisite professional learning)
  • Availability of resources
  • Time (no time to teach it )
  • (in certain cases in the US teachers weren’t implementing curriculum because they were not aware of its details they did not know how it could be applied in the classroom)

NAISA Conference Theme 1: Embracing refusals

Key Points:

• There needs to be a focus on indigenous knowledge creation, replication and promulgation amongst Indigenous students. This is not the same type of knowledge as in the westernised subjects where knowledge is fixed, hierarchical and privileged. Knowledge for and of the First Nations is different; its epistemology and ontology29 is different, notwithstanding these differences, it is designed for first nations’ peoples almost exclusively.

• High Impact factor of making mandatory pre-service teachers taking a preparatory unit in Indigenous Studies.

29 Ontology is defined as the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being. In essence it is a study of what ‘is’.
• Indigenous places have been radically transformed by colonialism and industrial development, this needs to be recognised and acknowledged in curriculum.
• Land and language changed by the grammar of colonisation – the land as the storyteller (bridging land and narrative).
• The patterns which make a difference – entanglements of land/settlers/first nations
• Centring questions in indigeneity.
• Indigenous sovereignty debased and deferred through a range of race relations over a period of time and in the context of particular Government policy.
• Colonisation – ‘composing a population’ of those who are included and excluded. Immigration restrictions and policies. So, government policy sets out who is part of the population and those who are not – e.g. White Australia Policy.
• Colonisation - restricting contact and employment practices, counting populations, excluding First Nations peoples on the basis of race from census and associated counts. This in effect determines who is legitimate and who is not – employment and census practices, access to government services and those who cannot effectively define citizenship.
• Colonisation impact granting the right to exist. Creating a racial order of inclusion and exclusion.
• In the colonisation narrative - territories must be peopled by the white race. Settler sovereignty at the expense of First Nations sovereignty, and the indispensable use of forced labour.
• Who comprises the population of ‘citizens’ determined by (white) Government.
• Newcomers: Gatekeepers of citizenship and dispossession.
• Settler interaction, desire and power, hierarchy, whose values and norms become accepted and become normalised.

Central Question: Who has the power to say ‘No’ and when this refusal is accepted and respected?

• Forms of learning colonial, centralised, hierarchical, fixed, privileged ordered: replication of Settler knowledge. (Non-consensual)
• First Nations forms of learning, decentralised, discursive, grounded in lived experience, practical, linked to Country, consensual and intimately linked to community, spirituality, cosmology, ontology and epistemology. (Consensual) – stands in opposition to the colonial practices and are subverted and repressed by them.
• Colonialism regulation of identity, (origin stories, citizenship and communal norms) extraction (land and (property rights) and interaction (consent, education, culture and cultural practices.)
• Examples of exemplar decolonisation: Language programs, teacher training programs, reclamation of culture and language.
Conference Theme 2: The Politics of Treaty Interpretation and the Tasks of Inheritance

Key Points:

- A focus on Canada – the myth of ‘consensual and non-violent settlement’ – via the numbered treaties (myths that Canada wishes to perpetuate without acknowledging past harm.)
- Treaties – ‘the politics of incoherencies’ – as a way of positioning colonial governments as superior.
- The Canadian numbered treaties – theft/betrayal/promises abandoned or broken in Canada and elsewhere.
- Treaties – sustain ongoing settler colonialism and domination by the denial of indigenous rights and legal practice, seeks to contain indigenous forms of political mobilisation. And the legitimacy of independent indigenous sovereignty and political orders and authority.
- Treaties – largely symbolic – the effect of which is to supress and silence indigenous sovereignty, control over internal affairs and ways of knowing and being.
- (White) rhetoric’s are politically expedient – involved to legitimise ongoing colonial power dynamics.
- Treaties – a containment practice to limit the agency of indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing and being.
- Treaties – limit the ability for indigenous self-governance.

Identity rather than polity.

- The construction of the constrained and settler defined ‘treaty Indians’ giving them symbolic rights rather than practical ones.
- Treaties negotiated top down, negotiated in a way that was not of the choosing of First Nations peoples ‘Indian’ rights connect to treaty not to individual indigenous rights.

Treaty

- Aspirational: something to create and form a shared understanding and shared aspersions – value is not just in its formation but in the way it shapes thinking and action for newcomers and First Nations.
- What about indigenous interpretation of treaty? Do indigenous intention of treaty reflect or resist settler interpretation of treaty?
- The Paradox of Treaty, as both a colonial and a DE colonial device – it is both reinforcing of power imbalance and an affirmation of indigenous agency.
- The limits of treaty, the dialectic of colonial and indigenous interpretation of Treaty.
- Treaty inheritance – what does it tell us about settler/indigenous relationship over time – it is a socio-political artefact.
The Question of Treaty – a perspective

Our theorising, as Australians, compared to similar settler-states, is far behind in terms of the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous law, treaties, identity, County and rights. This fracture exists in part because we have not practically or constitutionally enabled indigenous rights which, in a way has had the effect of deeply narrowing and limiting the space for academic and public debate, conceptualisation and understanding. The starting point for treaty is debate, but paradoxically, the debate and public discourse requires the formation of treaty, or at least the steps towards it, to genuinely engender and create space for discussion. This is demonstrated by the breath and sophistication of public and private discourse on this and treaty relations in those sovereign states where states have negotiated treaties with indigenous peoples, such as in Canada and New Zealand.

In Australia, we are at a different part of the journey, and our public, private and academic discourse reflects this, and is impoverished and narrowed by it. Particularly in the absence of a Treaty.

Asking students to consider treaty in Australia in an abstract and theoretical form, in the absence of treaty, and in the absence of serious and sustained political and public discourse of treaty, pushes the debate to be instantly fixed on the international dimension only and impoverishes it for our students, which creates practical hurdles for teachers in classrooms as, in part, treaty and what it might look like, provide for and aspire to, is so ill defined in Australia, and because the balance of serious thought and writing on treaty is so heavily swayed to the international literature.

Conference Theme 3: The Rhetoric of Indigenous Extermination and Genocide in Colonial and Postcolonial North America

Key Points:

The politics of language

Paradox 1: Concepts of genocide and vanishing become part of some First nations Identity. The adoption of a stylised victimhood of decline and marginalisation. Yet many of these First Nations remain...the erasure of nations has not occurred.

Paradox 2: Our ability to see First Nations peoples and yet not to recognise their sovereignty. Lack of acknowledgement of land or hunting grounds or of ongoing survival.

- First Nations have been, in some cases, reconceived by newcomers as small bands of stateless savages (and thus as stateless did not justify legal or territorial recognition)
Strategy of ‘petite’ nations, or adopted invisibility by some First peoples in order to avoid colonial attention, an intentional migration to the periphery of state control. However it suited some nations to be made invisible so they could reorganise.

Patterns of migration tells us something about the desirability of invisibility, First Nations peoples placed on the periphery; on the edges to avoid the impacts of colonialism.

‘Invisibility’ suited both parties – coloniser and colonised. But being invisible and in the absence of a treaty guarantee, there can be no property rights to uphold and protect. A lack of formal relationships and formal treaty creates problems for their status and identity as they are, and wish to be ‘rediscovered’. This is made difficult by the feeling that all the ‘real’ people have already been vanished.

In the United States there exists the historical paradox of fighting a civil war about freedom yet at the same time the war in the west was a colonial war, a war of Empire – the two appear inconsistent and dissonant.

The American Civil war a war of liberation and yet, at the same time, the war in the West was an example colonial war of enslavement of First Nations peoples. For example the 1862 Dakota War (Sioux Uprising) was a form of American imperialism at the expense of bands of the Dakota peoples.

The narrative of Colonial Creation Stories

- Careful rhetorical language use to positon the process of colonisation in a favourable light – for example the concept/myth of ‘Manifest Destiny’ with such linguistic devices, violence of the worse type can be framed as a ‘regrettable necessity’.
- The native story cannot coexist in this narrative – has to be written out - erased or genocide.
- The United States creation stories – the Civil War, the Revolution and War of Independence – resisting ‘savages’ and fighting for modernisation and civilised progress. Summed up as: ‘The sin of not using the land as God has intended’ First Nations stand in opposition to the elements of these stories.
- Warfare against First Nations as being ‘regrettable but unavoidable’ – The historical narrative in the United States, and elsewhere is that of first nations being ‘savages, uncivilised, rebels, criminals, lazy, backwards, ungodly’ - Unworthy of identity but worthy of violence and disappearance and removal from the collective memory. That First Nations need to be removed and assimilated or integrated to build them up – to recreate them. Settler State language allows for this and normalises it.

Indigenous Knowledge

- How was knowledge maintained? – knowing practices and processes, personal experience?
- Social memory, land memory arts, law and medicine ‘many hands, many minds’ (collaborative and intergenerational) the technological sphere – how to manipulate the natural world, create tools, make fabrics, movement of water...etc. use of plant life to cure (and kill.)
• Name calling of place and people and animals, cosmology, philosophy, beliefs and spirituality.
• Indigenous peoples and knowledge are reclaiming their rightful space.

Conference Theme 4: Te Ata Kura Educators – A New Dawn of Indigenous Political and Citizenship education in Aotearoa New Zealand

Key Points:

Māori resistance and resiliency

1835 – Māori Declaration of independence
1840 – Treaty

Waitangi tribunal has allowed some deeper discussions between nations about the past that would not have been possible without the treaty.

Principles for crown action in relation to the treaty. (From 1989 onwards)\textsuperscript{30}

Principle 1

The principle of government

The government has the right to govern and to make laws

Principle 2

The principle of self-management

The iwi have the right to organise as iwi, and under the law, to control their resources as their own.\textsuperscript{31}

Principle 3

The principle of equality

All New Zealanders are equal under the law.

It was suggested that the New Zealand colonisers set a course to manipulate the treaty so it means something for the colonisers and something else for first nations

Education, including early childhood education: should have a strong focus on the Treaty.

White people are prepared to accommodate native issues, but only to the point where they feel uncomfortable.


\textsuperscript{31} Iwi: The Māori-language word iwi means "people" or "nation", and is often translated as "tribe", or "a confederation of tribes
Rangatiratanga – the spirit of the Waitangi (must/should be embedded in all government actions.)

New Zealand governments continue to construct and change the nature of citizenship and identity which ‘wash out’ First Peoples ideas and individual personhood and collective identity which is not Iwi (first nations) this idea of all being equal under the law, discounts and ignores Iwi rights an agency.

Individual civic rights as a member of a liberal democracy – is a form of colonisation as it ignores iwi cultural citizenship

Concepts of liberalism and citizenship are a form of colonisation and needs to be critically exploited and decolonised.

Push to have a day of remembrance of the New Zealand Wars ... from a Māori perspective

Naming and a claiming of history and the truth of who we are, to define us as who we are – New Zealand First Nations need to reclaim the past and identity, site by site.

It was stressed how important it was to have explicit treaty education in New Zealand.

Importance of treaty education to overcome Pakeha\(^{32}\) myth making (of the noble savage) which continues today. Need to recognise the ongoing assumptions which continue to exist.

Pakeha thinking – still largely colonial closed, prejudice...... A staggering level of ignorance’ still exists...

Dialogical teaching style Important to recognise very strong Māori solidarity.

Need to traumatise colonisers – need to take them to a place where there is not composure. Need to subvert their understanding and present comfort.

Treaty education and strategies engaging the colonised and the colonisers.

Education which is more than an academic and an intellectual process –it involves a spiritual dimension as well.

‘The New Zealand Wars’ as a permanent fixture of NZ Curriculum.

‘Struggle without end’ the unfinished decolonisation project (colonisation continues in terms of views prejudice and the ‘gap’ history in settler countries with clear silences on first and settler nations the myth that ‘we are all one people” the myth of liberal democratic solidarity rather than first nation ethnic identity and solidarity. The absence of First Nations voices in politics, civil society, and the political, social and economic elites. The war continues the lack of recognition, return of lands water rights. Settler states ongoing resistance to return of rights and lands.

\(^{32}\) A white New Zealander as opposed to a Maori
Conference Theme 5: Race, Whiteness and Indignity – An Australian Perspective

Key Points:

Minorities become subjects against which their qualities and relative merit could be compared to ‘white’ judgements of excellence e.g. Australia’s National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Higher Education has been and remains ‘White’ – western curriculum western pedagogy concepts of excellence set by whiteness. Thus it excludes meaningful First peoples involvement.

Need to shift from equality to equity in reconciliation action plans in Australian universities.

Equivalence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous world views and perspectives.....questionable in both compulsory and post compulsory sectors.

It was argued that in the Australian context that many Indigenous Pro-Vice Chancellor position’s had only symbolic value that the university’s commitment to Indigenous peoples did not extend beyond that position and thus exonerates from real university engagement with Indigenous issues. In effect indigenous engagement is siloed into a corner of the university.

It was observed by an Australian Indigenous academic that you: ‘Have to appear that you are not too black, and not too white enough’ in order to be successful in achieving change in Australian universities.

Australian universities: white students has been prioritised, using white standards of excellence and achievement.

‘Whiteness’ – why do most white people believe that racism does not exist and most black people believe that it does?  (Whiteness – the white possessive.)

Critical theories of race Is the rise of the alt right – as an expression of contemporary whiteness? (Patriarchal white sovereignty.)

Academic and political whiteness has its own dynamic and narrative daily intersubjective relationships is the way racism and exclusion is expressed.

Indigenous projects and knowledge is neither understood valued or actioned.

Importance of ongoing work in Critical race and whiteness studies.

The creation and maintenance of the white possessive space is a major challenge for Indigenous peoples It emerged out of the Enlightenment which structure dispossession of the

33 The concept of ‘Whiteness’ encapsulates a wide range of ideas. It refers to more than skin colour; it is the privileging of those racial, cultural and religious identities that most resemble the typical characteristics associated with white Europeans. Privileges include (but are not limited to) not being discriminated against in employment and education, being less likely to be arrested for the same behavior than ‘non-whites’. As well as being adequately represented in all forms of popular media. Consequently, the terms ‘white’ and ‘people of colour’ are not merely descriptive – they are political. When we talk about ‘white people’, we are not really talking about skin colour but about those who most benefit from whiteness. Correspondingly, when we talk about ‘people of colour’, we talk about those who are most excluded from power, wealth and status.
'Other’ - it values order, hierarchy, exclusion, domination, entitlement and restriction and possession – whiteness establishes the laws of behaviour for its members – they function as tools of racism and partially within the Enlightenment episteme, the other and racism are intrinsically tied to the enlighten episteme. They establish the basis of knowledge, and shape behaviours needs and desires are prorates from a white perspective. He earth exists only to serve whiteness, vs the other – (see Edward Said: Orientalism)

Identity tied to modernity and Whiteness defined by privilege and consequence. It constructs and maintains its own logic its own epistemology and ontology. . (What is and how we understand it. Whiteness as a form of identity – privileges certain groups.)

A case study of Counterfeit identities

Joseph Boyden (US) – indigenous counterfeit.

‘Playing Indian’ performing indigeneity.’

Use of symbols by whites – an ongoing symbol and indicator of white patriarchy

The Washington Redskin’s football team – example of white presupposed legitimacy and control over indigenous identity and symbols of identity. Whiteness is still privileged. Privileged white logic is continued.

The continued white appropriation of Indigeneity: for example Jonny Depp as Tonto in the Lone Ranger. (Cannot be reversed by indigenous peoples.)

Being indigenous is self-identification – it is who claims you, where you belong and how you belong – connection to country, culture and country.

‘Whiteness’ is inherently normative. It requires a certain performance and has its own logic, norms values, ontology and epistemology. ‘Whiteness’ is conceptualised through the radicalized and racial ‘other.’

‘Otherness’ is a construction and is discursively sustained and transferred. It has possessive value as a property right owned and mediated by whites in whiteness. The ways of identity is constructed is embodies in the law as (white) peoples have rights, access to privilege and stouts as citizens via its own logic, epistemology and ontology, This is evidenced by however white’s define it. Just look at the Whiteness and the other was sustained in terra nullius, the absence of black property rights and the absence of legal personality of aboriginal peoples during the first century after British invasion.

34 ‘Otherness’ has been used very effectively to degrade, downplay and marginalise First Nations peoples. ‘Otherness’ refers to the construct of social identity. In order to affirm the groups identity it is important to compare it with that of the ‘other’ the other being a social construct of the qualities, values and characteristics which are not shared in the relationship of the initial group. Social Identities have some element of exclusivity. of fulfilling a set of criteria. In adopting a particular social identity ‘we’ cannot belong to the group unless ‘they’ (‘others’) do not belong to ‘our’ group. The outsiders; the ‘Other’ are seen as different and of lesser value and importance. ‘Other’. The most significant work in this areas is that of Edward Said in his text Orientalism.
NAISA: General Reflections

The conference was a rich, highly intellectually and stimulating few days. The breath of papers given was impressive, and there were many I would have liked to have heard but they were running concurrently with others of greater importance.

Many papers adopted a strong critical theory approach to Indigenous studies, arguing that is there was little doubt, that in the face of self-described ongoing colonialism, the advent of the alt-right and the settler states still in effect, attempting a continuance of institutional ‘vanishing’ of First Nations identity, that First Peoples should continue to be fiercely politically active and resistant to political/cultural/economic subordination. There was little focus on teaching and learning or pedagogy at the senior high school level and given the client group at the conference, this was not surprising.

At times the tone of the conference papers was a little militant, not surprising given the First Nations representatives, perceived threats to demographics and the articulated need for resistance and collective activism in a variety of forms – in particular in North America, there is a focus on hands-on protest.

It was noticeable the absence of indigenous voices from central and in particular South America, there appeared to be no representation from eastern or central Asia, Africa or the Russian Federation (all of which were or have been subject to settler colonisation).

United States Bureau of Indian Education

A Bureau of the United States Department of the Interior

Image Source: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-XkI1LmYnCWM/19_EVv6BHvI/AAAAAAAABRE/SN4iXWv6Ed4/s1600/US+Department+of+The+Interior+Bureau+of+Indian+Affairs+Header.jpg

Context

As has been suggested earlier in this report, the heightened contemporary focus on cultural identity has led to many Native American tribes reopening tribal public schools as a way of increasing the cultural awareness of the young people of their nations. These schools focus not only on providing quality education to these children, but also on teaching native tongues and traditions to the students of the school. The benefits of Native American education in the United States has been variously described. It has been observed that First Nations students in these schools have the opportunity to experience immersion in their culture and language that would
otherwise not exist. Further the teaching of history differs from a non-Indigenous approach. There is a stronger and explicit focus on the history of an individual student’s particular nation, and from that focus a historical relationship to others beyond that nation. This form of education, it is suggested ‘leaves students with a deep understanding of who they are as a member of a Native American tribe.’

According to the National Congress of Native Americans, there are approximately 644,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students in the US K-12 system, representing 1.2 percent of public school students nationally. Ninety percent of Native students attend public schools, while eight percent attend schools administered by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). States where Native students comprise the largest proportions of the total student populations include Alaska (27 percent); Oklahoma (19 percent); Montana (11 percent); New Mexico (11 percent); and South Dakota (11 percent).

Native students’ academic achievement and educational attainment lags far behind that of their white peers. Over the past 10 years, Native students have been the only population to have not improved in reading or math (grades four and eight). Nationwide, Native youth face some of the lowest high school graduation rates, and even fewer enrol in and graduate from college. On average, less than 50 percent of Native students graduate from high school each year in the seven states with the highest percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Providing Native children with a quality education is a core component of the federal government’s trust responsibility to tribes, and this commitment must be upheld. Tribes are deeply invested in improving Indian education, and strengthening tribal control over education is key to Native students’ success. Tribal governments are in the best position to address the unique educational needs of our Native students for a simple but intuitive reason: tribes know their children and communities the best.

The recently introduced Native Culture, Language, and Access for Success (CLASS) Act recognises and supports the role of tribal governments as sovereigns in directing the education of Native students. The bill provides a number of provisions that tribal leaders have long sought, including increased tribal control over the education of tribal citizens, a formula grant program for language immersion schools, and comprehensive wraparound services for Native youth.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the major federal statute governing public education in states and school districts across the country. NCAI is working to ensure that the following tribal priorities are emphasised:

- Strengthen tribal control of education.
- Preserve and revitalize Native languages.

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• Provide tribes with access to tribal member student records.
• Encourage tribal/state partnership.37

First Nations Education in the United States

First Nations education is more commonly referred to as Native American education and generally refers to schools that cater to Native American students. These schools exist on reservations and in communities with a large population of Native Americans. The introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act from 2001 ensued that there was uniformity in standards and expectations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools in the United States changed things.

The No Child Left Behind Act allows tribal schools the opportunity to setup their own programs and determine the progress of their students. However the schools must still meet certain ‘core’ requirements if they are to receive funds for education from the government.

Tribal schools are also monitored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (which forms part of the Department of the Interior). The Bureau requires that the schools test their students each year to check their progress. These tests also ensure that the students of the school meet the basic requirements in terms of their education. These schools don't use the typical standardised tests, but rather tests that examine the skills of their students and what they've learned throughout the year.

Resources on tribal schools include:

• Tribal Schools Compliance Assistance Notebook: provides resources on the idea of tribal schools.
• Indian Schools, Colleges Tribes: offers resources on different tribal related schools.
• BIA Tribal Schools: looks at how the No Child Left Behind Act impacted these schools.
• Association of Community Tribal Schools: focuses on helping schools ensure that students receive the training they need.
• Hannahville Indian School: a school dedicated to educating Potawatami Indians.

The one main difference between a tribal school and a traditional school is the curriculum. Native American schools traditionally focus on educating their students about the heritage of their people and their tribe. They run special programs throughout the year to teach the students and even host special events regarding specific moments in their shared past. There's a demonstrable emphasis on culture that non-Indigenous schools don't offer.38


Meeting with Jacquelyn M. Cheek, Special Assistant to the Director, Bureau of Indian Education

Key Discussion Points

The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is directly responsible for 183 schools. In contrast there are a large number of schools which are directly administered on reserves by First Nations peoples, which are federally funded but have a higher degree of autonomy in terms of curriculum reforms when compared with those schools directly run by the Bureau.

The standards for curriculum, assessment and reporting have been influenced by two US Federal laws, ‘No Child Left Behind’ (2001) and the ‘Every Student Succeeds Act’.

The schools administered directly by the BIE as well as those administered by First Nations peoples on Reserves, are obliged to meet common standards for assessment and accountability.

Importantly in the setting of the standards and accountability frameworks for reserves schools as well as BIE schools there has to be ongoing and direct consultation and consent from the respective tribal First Nations community, as ultimately it will be that community which will be responsible for maintaining standards and ensuring that the schools effectively function on a day-to-day basis.

Important web-based resources with respect to First Nations education in the United States includes:


Press Release that was issued on the above:


BIE’s website:  https://www.bie.edu/

The Federal Acknowledgement Process:  https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ofa

Tribal Leaders Directory:  https://www.bia.gov/tribal-leaders-directory

Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs:

Canada in Detail

Dates Visited: 20 May-15 June 2018

“I for one think that the Great White Queen Mother has offered us a way of life when the buffalo are no more… Can we stop the power of the white man from spreading over the land like grasshoppers that cloud the sky and then fall to consume every blade of grass and every leaf on the trees in their path? I think not. Before this happens let us ponder carefully our choice of roads…

What we speak of and do now will last as long as the sun shines and the river runs, we are looking forward to our children’s children.”

Cree Chief Mistawasis Speaking at (Canadian) Treaty Six negotiations

Context

The Canadian government recognizes 618 First Nations communities. The most recent addition was Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation in Quebec, which was constituted in October, 2011. There
are more than 630 First Nation communities in Canada, which represent more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages.39

The principal central Government agency responsible for First Nations in Canada is Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.40

The Canadian Constitution recognises three groups of Aboriginal peoples: Indians (more commonly referred to as First Nations), Inuit and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

More than 1.67 million people in Canada identify themselves as an Aboriginal person, according to the 2016 Canadian Census. Aboriginal peoples are:

• The fastest growing population in Canada – grew by 42.5% between 2006 and 2016.
• The youngest population in Canada – about 44% were under the age of 25 in 2016.41

**Governance arrangements for Education in Canada,**

Canada is a federation of 10 provinces and three territories. Under the Canadian Constitution, provincial governments have exclusive responsibility for all levels of education. There is no ministry or department of education at the federal level. Canada's three territories — Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut — do not have the same constitutional status as the provinces and are subject, in many areas, to more direct control by the federal government. With respect to education, however, the federal government has delegated this responsibility to the territorial governments, which, in turn, cooperate with the provinces to deliver post-secondary programs.

**Current Government initiatives inclusive of First Nations**

The Government of Canada is working with Indigenous to advance the recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination. These discussions represent more than 320 Indigenous communities, with a total population of more than 700,000 people.42

According to the Canadian government, “the goal is to bring greater flexibility to negotiations based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership”. The intention is to provide opportunities for Indigenous groups and the Canadian government to explore new ideas and ways to reach agreements that will recognize the rights of Indigenous groups and advance their vision of self-determination for the benefit of their communities and all Canadians.43

41 ibid
42 ibid
43 Ibid.
These discussions are community-driven and respond to the unique rights, needs and interests of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis groups where existing federal policies have not been able to do so. This may involve:

• Jointly developing new ways to recognize rights and title in agreements
• Building agreements in steps
• Exploring ways to advance treaty rights and interests
• Finding common ground to settle litigation outside of the courts
• Using existing tools that are available government-wide outside of treaty and self-government processes to help address the unique needs of each group
• Building awareness of the treaty relationship. 44

The Canadian Government has recognised the importance and urgency of ongoing arrangements and agreements with First Nations since 2016 a wide range of agreements have been finalised, as summarised below:

A Precis of Canadian First Nations Agreements since 2016

- October 10, 2017: Canada and Snuneymuxw First Nation advance reconciliation through settlement of historic claim
- October 6, 2017: Agreement-in-Principle reached to resolve the Sixties Scoop Litigation
- September 4, 2017: Canada and Tsleil-Waututh Nation take steps to advance reconciliation with signing of Letter of Understanding
- August 24, 2017: Government of Canada renews partnership with 33 Treaty-based co-management boards and committees in the Northwest Territories
- August 16, 2017: Canada and the Anishinabek Nation celebrate the signing of historic education self-government agreement
- August 14, 2017: Moving beyond the 1965 agreement to improve support to children and families in Ontario First Nations
- July 24, 2017: Canada and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations working together to reform child and family services for First Nations in Saskatchewan
- July 18, 2017: Canada and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee sign agreement on Cree Nation governance
- June 15, 2017: Canada and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada sign new partnership agreement
- June 12, 2017: The Prime Minister and the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations sign Memorandum of Understanding on shared priorities
- April 27, 2017: Canada and Whitecap Dakota First Nation sign Agreement-in-Principle on self-government

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44 Ibid.
April 13, 2017: The Prime Minister of Canada and President of the Métis National Council welcome the signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord

March 31, 2017: Tripartite Framework Agreement to provide sustainable future for Kashechewan First Nation

March 27, 2017: Canada, Ontario and Williams Treaties First Nations take first step towards a negotiated resolution of Alderville litigation

February 27, 2017: The Governments of Canada and Ontario and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians sign historic education agreement

January 27, 2017: Tsilhqot'in and Canada take first steps towards reconciliation with signing of Letter of Understanding

January 25, 2017: Canada and the Siksika Nation advance reconciliation with signing of Castle Mountain Settlement

December 16, 2016: Minister Bennett signs historic Education Agreement with Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre

December 15, 2016: Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada on advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

July 12, 2016: Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on a New Fiscal Relationship with the Assembly of First Nations

April 14, 2016: Canada and Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point take key step in their journey toward healing and reconciliation with historic Camp Ipperwash Settlement

April 8, 2016: Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon gather and reach agreement on a way forward for Yukon's Environmental Assessment Legislation.45

Background to the Canadian Education system

There is not a federal government controlled or funded state school system in Canada. State-funded provincial schools are called public or separate schools (which are Roman Catholic public schools).46

Canadian Public Schools

Canadian public schools are the responsibility of individual provincial departments of education and funded mainly from local and provincial taxes, with some federal funds. Practices and policies regarding education (public and private) vary depending on the province. Provincial departments of education determine education policy in accordance with provincial laws. The respective provincial minister of education is responsible for setting policy relating to educational affairs, such as the allocation of provincial and federal funds, certification of teachers, textbooks and library services, provision of records and educational statistics, and setting and enforcing the term of compulsory education.

45 Government of Canada: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1487192822059/1529105739261
46 See: Schools in Canada - Canadian Education System: https://www.schoolsincanada.com/Canadian-Education-System.cfm
One of the unique aspects of the Canadian public school system is the amount of decentralisation and the degree to which schools are run by local school authorities. Each province is divided at the local level into school districts governed by a superintendent and a locally elected school board (or board of education) that decides instructional policies, hires teachers, purchases equipment and generally overseas the day-to-day running of schools. Most Canadian schools have Parents Advisory Councils (PACs) that mainly concern themselves with raising money to buy equipment such as computers, video surveillance, emergency lighting, playground equipment and school buses for children with special needs.

Teacher qualifications and standards vary from province to province. All provinces require teachers to have a licence or certificate to teach in public elementary and secondary schools, although the actual requirements for teacher certificates are set by provincial education departments. All provinces require a bachelor’s degree for teaching elementary grades and most require a bachelor’s degree as the minimum preparation for teaching in secondary schools, while a few insist on five years’ study or a masters degree. The full-time teaching force at primary and secondary level is around 310,000, with another 40,000 at universities and colleges. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child’s education and schools are constantly seeking volunteer ‘teacher’s assistants’ to help with reading, art and special projects.47

Two modes of First Nations Education in Canada

As suggested earlier in this report, education is provincially based in Canada, with Federal Government providing funding for First Nations Reserve schools. (That is to say First Nations schools which are typically, but not exclusively located on reserve lands held and administered by First Nations.)

The other form of schools in Canada are non-reserve, or mainstream schools, in which student may not be exposed to much if any education in First Nations history and culture, as this is dependent upon the variables of individual provincial curriculum requirements as well as the interest and level of commitment to the curriculum from individual schools, their teachers and school superintendents.

As was observed in New Zealand, it is possible or both non-Indigenous and indigenous students to undertake their compulsory education without meaningful engagement with First nations or Indigenous study.

As noted above, Canadian Reserve schools are administered by First Nations and receive federal and provincial funding.

These schools are responsible for delivering the requisite provincial curriculum and additionally provide for a focus on local knowledge’s and forms of pedagogy there are issues with these schools a recent report found that their retention and achievement levels, when compared to the non-reserve schools were low.

47 Ibid.
The study named: ‘Students in Jeopardy: An Agenda for Improving Results in Band-Operated Schools’ drafted and released in 2016 by the C.D. Howe Institute highlights the many repercussions stemming from low levels of education, including unemployment, poverty, limited social and economic opportunities, crime, health problems and ongoing dependence on government for housing.

The report found that only four of 10 young Canadian First Nation adults living on reserves across the country have finished high school. Those figures contrast sharply with graduation rates of seven out of 10 for off-reserve Canadian First Nations students and nine out of 10 for non-First Nations students. The study also found eight out of ten Métis graduate from high school across the country.

The research singles out British Columbia as leading the country for high-school certification on reserves, at nearly 60 per cent – which is above the national average of 42 per cent. This in part is explained by the existence of a standing province-wide Aboriginal Education Group as well as collaboration between British Colombia’s First Nations Education Steering Committee, the province and the federal government.

Another factor at work in defining the success of First nations education is the residual mistrust of Government across Canada by First Nations peoples as a result of the historical experience Residential Schools wherein First Nations children were taken from their families, denied their culture, the exercise of their culture and language, and in many documented cases subject to physical and sexual abuse.

**Canadian Residential Schools**

The history of Canadian First Nations experiences of the Residential school system is a cornerstone of reforms to First Nations education in Canada. Residential schools for First Nations peoples in Canada date back to the 1870s. Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, and the last school closed in 1996. These government-funded, church-run schools were set up to eliminate parental involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Canadian First Nations children.

During this era, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed in these schools often against their parents' wishes. Many were forbidden to speak their language and practice their own culture. While there is an estimated 80,000 former students living today, the ongoing impact of residential schools has been felt throughout generations and has contributed to social problems that continue to exist.

On June 11, 2008, the (then) Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, on behalf of the Government of Canada, delivered a formal apology in the House of Commons to former

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48 See: C.D. Howe Institute Commentary Number 444. An Agenda for Improving Results in Band-Operated Schools: [https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/Commentary_444_0.pdf](https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/Commentary_444_0.pdf)

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

students, their families, and communities for Canada's role in the operation of the residential schools.52

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The work of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in providing an opportunity for Canadians to articulate and achieve atonement for past harms in the relationship between First and settler state nations cannot be underestimated for its intrinsic value as well as in setting the tone for educational reform in the country.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has a mandate to learn the truth about what happened in the residential schools and to inform all Canadians about what happened in the schools. The Commission will document the truth of what happened by relying on records held by those who operated and funded the schools, testimony from officials of the institutions that operated the schools, and experiences reported by survivors, their families, communities and anyone affected by the residential school experience and its subsequent impacts.

The Commission seeks to support Canadian First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and Canadians in a process of truth and healing leading toward reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.

The Commission views reconciliation as an ongoing individual and collective process that will require participation from all those affected by the residential school experience. This includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis former students, their families, communities, religious groups, former Indian Residential School employees, government, and the people of Canada.53

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission has:

• Prepared a complete historical record on the policies and operations of residential schools.

• Completed a public report including recommendations to the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

• Established a national research centre that will be a lasting resource about the IRS legacy.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Activities

Statement Gathering:

Provide a holistic, culturally appropriate and safe setting for former students, their families and communities in which to share their experiences with the Commission.

Anyone affected by the residential schools experience might share his or her story by providing a written or recorded statement, in a private one-on-one interview or through a public discussion.

52 See: Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system, at: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649

Participation is voluntary and participants can choose how they want to share.

**National Events:**
Host seven national events in different regions across Canada.

**Community Events:**
Support community events designed by individual communities to meet their unique needs.

**Research:**
Coordinate document collection and undertake specific research to be incorporated into the TRC Report and the National Research Centre.

**Public Education:**
Support outreach, media and communication efforts.

**Commemoration:**
Support commemoration activities that honour residential schools survivors and pay tribute in a lasting manner.⁵⁴

**The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Education**

As a central pillar of Canadian reconciliation with its First Nations the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has a key message regarding the value and centrality of education.

Education can be considered a key to reconciliation in Canada because, according to the Commission: ’it builds bridges of understanding. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission actually called for it to lead Canada’s reconciliation effort.’

“First Nations are doing their part to help prepare non-First Nations educators, but we need to see concrete action by provinces and territories and institutions to better prepare educators to teach our shared history.” According to the official publication of the Assembly of First Nations.⁵⁵

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⁵⁴ Source: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

⁵⁵ Canadian Assembly of First Nations: http://www.afn.ca/Home/
The Province of Ontario and First Nations Studies

Ontario is a national and international leader in First Nations engagement and curriculum development. In Ontario, First Nations Studies is known as Native Studies. The two key curriculum offerings of relevance to my work are: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Native Studies, 1999 and the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Native Studies, 2000. (Soon to be superseded by First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies.)

Key Ontario First Nations Curriculum Resource Documents:


The Place of Native Studies (First Nations Studies) in the Ontario Curriculum

Native studies provides students in Ontario schools with a broad range of knowledge related to Aboriginal peoples to help them better understand Aboriginal issues of public interest discussed at the local, regional, and national levels. Students develop the skills necessary to discuss issues and participate in public affairs. Through their involvement in Native studies, students increase their awareness and understanding of the history, cultures, world views, and contributions of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

By its very nature, Native studies is integrative. For example, when students examine the terms of a treaty negotiated by an Aboriginal nation with the Crown, they are combining both Native studies and history. When they use the works of Aboriginal writers to study the theme of renewal, they are combining Native studies and English. Similarly, when they use multimedia resources to create art forms about contemporary Aboriginal issues, they are combining Native studies with art.

In Ontario schools, subject matter from any course in Native studies can be combined with subject matter from one or more courses in other disciplines to create an interdisciplinary course.

In Native studies courses in Ontario in Grades 9 and 10, students examine the cultures and post-1900 history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These courses lay the foundation for the Native studies courses in Grades 11 and 12. The courses provide broader and deeper explorations of twentieth-century issues concerning Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society.57

Teaching Approaches

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education “It is important that students have opportunities to learn in a variety of ways: individually and cooperatively; independently and with teacher direction; through hands-on activities; and through the study of examples followed by practice. There is no single correct way to teach or to learn. The nature of the Native studies curriculum calls for a variety of strategies for learning. The strategies should vary according to the curriculum expectations and the needs of the students.”58

Curriculum Expectations

Curriculum Strands

The expectations in the Ontario Native studies courses are grouped in four distinct but related strands59:

Identity. Identity is a concept created in response to the question: Who am I? The investigation of identity is a personal journey of discovery and realization, which is part of the maturation process of all students during the adolescent years. Historical events, such as the Indian Act, have made the issue of identity a particular concern to Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians.

Relationships. This strand serves as a focus for exploring ties that Aboriginal peoples have developed and maintained with the natural environment – the land and its life-sustaining resources. In addition, students will explore the personal connections that Aboriginal peoples have made spiritually and culturally with their world.

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
**Sovereignty.** In the traditional governments of Aboriginal peoples, sovereignty is based on a spiritual understanding that the Creator gives human beings responsibility for governing themselves and taking care of the natural environment. In current discussions about sovereignty, Aboriginal peoples assert that this understanding is within themselves and that self-determination is basic to the needs of all human beings.

**Challenges.** Among the challenges faced by First Nations peoples today in defining their collective place in Canadian life is the need to reclaim, reassert, and further develop the distinct identities, relationships, and sovereignty that First Nations peoples have always held.

In most of the courses, the strands are further divided into three thematic sections: Aboriginal World View, Aboriginal and Canadian Relations, and Renewal and Reconciliation. A proper understanding of the contemporary situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada requires some understanding of the diversity of the Aboriginal population; the Aboriginal world view, which is manifested in distinctive lifestyles; the history of relations between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada; and the collaborative efforts of Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society to redefine their relationships.\(^{60}\)

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*Discussions with Krishanthi Sivakumanatha, Senior policy advisor and Beena Kondopparamoil, Senior policy advisor, Indigenous Education Office, Indigenous Education and wellbeing Division, Ontario Ministry of Education*

**Key Points**

**Indigenous Education in Ontario**

An overview of Ontario’s indigenous education strategy in supporting First nation, Metis and Inuit students to achieve their full potential. The Ministry of Education argues that it is fully committed to improving indigenous education in Ontario, achievement and wellbeing and closing the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Importantly Indigenous identity and rights are defined in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act 1982 including the significant of Indigenous Peoples treaty rights.

The key legislative framework for Indigenous education in Ottawa are based on five elements:

- Law of Fiduciary Obligations and the Crown (The Crown has the obligation to act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of Indigenous peoples)
- Constitutional duty to Consult (Aboriginal peoples)
- Aboriginal Rights (protected under section 35 of the Canadian Constitutional Act 1982)
- Treaty Rights – sourced from the treaty documents entered into Crown and Aboriginal community
- The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

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\(^{60}\) Ibid.
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, created in 2008, and resulting in 94 Calls to action in 2015, resulted in some specific calls related to education, these being:

1. Implementing mandatory, age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties and Indigenous people’s’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada
2. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect
3. Identifying professional development for educators to support these goals.

"Education delivered through residential schools, was the tool for assimilation. It was education that helped perpetuate the situation we see ourselves in today for Indigenous people in Canada. We believe that it will be education, again, that will be the tool that best addresses all of that, of education will create knowledge and from knowledge will come understanding. From understanding will come respect – both self-respect for Indigenous people and mutual respect for all"

**The Honourable Justice Senator Murray Sinclair of Canada.**

*Paraphrased as: ‘Education got us into this, and education will get us out of it.’*

Specific initiatives undertaken to support Indigenous students in Ontario.61

**Supporting Indigenous Student wellbeing**

This involves:

- Holistic approaches that pay attention to the physical, social, emotional mental and spiritual dimensions of being
- Positive relationships: family, caregivers, Indigenous community, school/classroom, community
- Recognising that for Indigenous students wellbeing is rooted in culture, access to land, language and traditional teachings
- Recognising the diversity amongst Indigenous peoples and understanding of where they come from and where they are going
- Paying attention to the ways that the history of colonisation continues to impact Indigenous people.

**Culturally Inclusive Curriculum**

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on Governments to develop mandatory, age-appropriate curriculum, so as to grow the knowledge of all students.
- Revisions to the curriculum focus on strengthening the learning connected to Indigenous perspectives, cultures and histories and ways of knowing to grow the awareness and knowledge of all students.

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61 See: Indigenous Education in Ontario: [http://www2.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/supporting.html](http://www2.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/supporting.html)
The Ontario Ministry of Education works in collaboration with Indigenous teachers, Elders, knowledge keepers and community representatives as well as residential school survivors to develop age and grade appropriate curricula.

Funding was provide to Indigenous partners as well as education stakeholders to undertake curriculum revisions as well as target resource development and educator capacity building, including learning and teaching about First Nation, Metis and Inuit perspectives, cultures, contributions and histories including the history and legacy of residential schools, treaties and the Indian Act.

**Indigenous Languages**

- The Ministry provides funding for indigenous languages in schools as a mechanism in supporting First Nations cultures, perspectives and contributions
- Indigenous Languages symposium have been run in 2017
- Additional funding has been provide for long-term planning for Indigenous languages revitalisation by Indigenous organisations.

**Supporting Educators**

Initial teacher education in Ontario requires teachers to acquire knowledge and skills pertaining to Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. This includes:

- The cultural and linguistic qualities contributed by Indigenous Families and community’s to each child’s positive identity development, learning and well-being
- The importance of histories, cultures, contributions, perspectives and treaties to contemporary indigenous communities partners, Elders to support culturally responsive and relevant curriculum and assessment practices, including those reflecting Indigenous pedagogies
- The diversity of languages within Indigenous communities and ways of supporting multilingual language development.
- The colonial experiences of Indigenous peoples, such as residential and school experiences and the ongoing impact of these experiences in Indigenous communities
- The development of relationships with Indigenous community

**Building Capacity of Teachers**

- Ongoing professional learning is an integral part of the process. Teachers may undertake an Additional Qualifications (AQ’s), accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers which is highly structured and rigorous.
- Teachers can specialise in First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies, Native Languages, First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples, Understanding Traditional Teachings, Histories, Current Issues and Cultures and Supporting First Nations Metis and Inuit Students: Guidance and Counselling.
Partnerships and Collaboration

The development and engagement with Indigenous partners is an essential part of the work of the Ministry. These relationships include the Ministry, School Boards, Indigenous partners and community members.

These partnerships and collaborations take a variety of forms:

- First Nations Lifelong Learning Table: this provides a forum for Ontario’s First Nations leadership and the Ontario government to work together to address issues and opportunities related to first Nation lifelong learning.
- The Steering Committee provides overall advice and direction on the implementation of the strategic plan for First Nations education.
- The Minsters Advisory Council on First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education (MAC) is a forum to bring together indigenous partners and education sector stakeholders to discuss topics related to indigenous education. The Council provides strategic direction and facilities direct engagement and co-development related to ministry initiatives. Under the MAC is the MAC Working Group a technical table which provides specific and technical input on the ministry’s work. ⁶²

The role of Ontario School Boards

Individual school boards play a central part in the effective realisation of Ministry initiatives in First Nations education. They:

- Work collaboratively with local indigenous partner organisations.
- Establish forma working committees with First Nations.
- Develop policy and to support the local needs of First Nations via schools.
- Have dedicated indigenous education lead officers in district school boards which are responsible for engaging with indigenous communities, partners and relevant organisations.
- working with local schools in building stronger relationships with their Indigenous communities, sharing information, identifying and promoting best practice in First Nations education and enhancing collaborative work to support First Nations Metis and Inuit student achievement and wellbeing.

Ontario Ministry of Education: Education for Reconciliation: Integration of Indigenous content and learning into revised curriculum.

As stated earlier the Provincial governments, including that of Ontario, have a responsibility, resulting from the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to the following:

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⁶² Ibid.
Call to Action number 62

We call upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal Peoples, and educators, to

Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade twelve students.63

Call to Action number 63

We call upon the Council of Ministers’ of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

I. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

II. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history

III. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.

IV. Identifying teacher-training needs related to the above.64

Specifying actions arising took a variety of forms. Firstly a commitment from provincial governments to act. On 30 May 2016, Ontario apologised for Residential schools and released an action plan for Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

(Then) Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said:

“We will educate all Ontarians about the horrors of the residential school system, the betrayals of past governments and our rights and responsibilities as treaty people: because in Ontario we are all treaty people. This will include the work we are doing to ensure our education curriculum teaches every child in Ontario the truth about our past and what it means to us today.”65

The Ontario Ministry has created the metaphor of new learning as a window or doorway, in that we can pull the curtain back from the past to better understand it: that First Nations peoples can see themselves in the curriculum, through a window, and like a doorway, both Indigenous and non-indigenous learners can walk through together.

In order to meaningfully respond to First Nations curriculum reform there are five related elements:

1. Stakeholder engagement and partnerships.
2. Curriculum enhancements.

63 See: Canadian Government Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

64 See: Canadian Government Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

3. Educator/Student resources.
4. Educator capacity building.
5. Leadership accountability.\textsuperscript{66}

This process is managed by a Working Together Steering Committee, which:

- Nominated writers for the curriculum revision.
- Reviewed and provided input on the revised curriculum.
- Nominated people to be part of the Joint Implementation Working Group.
- The Steering Committee acts as liaison with their associations to inform them on progress and promote the initiative.

Curriculum reform was comprehensive and in accordance with Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The revisions impacted on the following courses in the province:

- Social Sciences grades 1-6
- History grades 7, 8 and 10
- Geography grade 9
- Civics and Citizenship grade 10

New courses developed as a result of this curriculum development process include:

- NAC 10 (Year 9): Expressions of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Cultures
- NAC 20 (Year 10) First Nations, Meits and Inuit in Canada
- NBE3U/3C/3E (Year 11’) English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Metis and Inuit Voices
- NDA3M (Year 11) Contemporary First Nations, Meits and Inuit Issues and Perspectives
- NBV3C/3E (Year 11) World Views and Aspirations of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Communities in Canada
- NDG4M (Year 12) First Nations, Metis and Inuit Governance in Canada
- NDW4M (Year 12) Contemporary Indigenous Issues and Perspectives in a Global Context\textsuperscript{67}

The last of which is analogous to the Tasmanian First Nation Level 3 course.

\textsuperscript{66} Ontario Ministry of Education http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/CurriculumRefresh/index.html#ec
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
Discussions with Evelyn Wilson, Associate Director, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

University of Toronto.

The meeting focused on the preparation of Ottawa teachers to engage with and teach Native Studies (as it is presently called in Ontario), and the professional support given to new and pre-existing teachers as well as members of individual school leadership teams.

It is noteworthy that the Province of Ontario has made significant progress over the last decade in raising the literacy and numeracy levels of all its students. This, has arisen from a range of factors, one of which is extensive teacher perpetration and accrediting processes. For teachers to maintain registration they are required to undertake significant levels of professional learning. Moreover to teach ‘new’ subjects with which they have been hitherto unfamiliar, they are required to undertake programs, run by the Ontario College of Teachers. Such a course would run 125 hours. These professional learning opportunities are mandatory for subject specific expertise to be developed. It was argued that the very high level of teacher efficacy in Ontario, was, in part, due to the mandated requirements for profession learning, such as that associated with teaching of Native Studies.
As is the case with New Zealand, it is possible for students who are not attending a First Nations reserve school that they might be able to graduate from High school without having had any meaningful engagement with First Nations Studies.

The diversity of schools in Ontario, in specific detail the schools which are tailored for First Nations students, as detailed elsewhere in this report, provides affirmation for those students and those communities. Further specific targeted financial support from the Federal Government is provide directly to those schools and the schools board provide technical and administrative support to them.

In the reserve schools there is a requirement to deliver the province’s curriculum however this is done in a culturally sensible manner, with input from First Nations communities with a higher level of intervention and support than that which might be found typically in other Ontario schools.

It was acknowledged that the focus on providing an equitable range of educational resource and support mechanism for First Nations students, was, in part, to address the significant disparity in graduation rates between First Nations students and non-Indigenous students. In Ontario, a very high achieving province, the rate of High school graduation across the province for First Nations students was quoted as being approximately 17% whereas for non-Indigenous students it is in excess of 80%.68

Specific approaches which have been found to be effective in engaging First Nations students in Ontario schools include:

- Inquiry based Learning
- Learning sequences which affirm First Nations Identity, particularly though storytelling, story sharing and language
- The introduction of the concept and practice of Restorative Practice.
- The including of First Nations elders in the classroom, including in planning learning sequences.
- Lessons which include the reclamation of cultural practise such as drum making or smoking ceremonies.
- Lesson sequences which acknowledge and affirm First Nations ways of knowing and being – for example the study of First Nations hunting practices, origin stores and medicine and herbal medical practices.69

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68 Conversation Grover/De Palma
69 For more information on the work of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education see: https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/oise/Home/index.html
A case study for teachers’ mandatory requirements by the mandating of Additional Qualifications (AQ’s) in Native (First Nations) Studies: The role of the Ontario College of Teachers

The Ontario College of Teachers is the self-regulating body for the teaching profession in Ontario. By contrast to Teacher Registration in Tasmania which is in the hands of Government and has a very limited mandate, the Ontario College has a unique role in the Canadian education system. It does represent and register teachers however it’s role is more expansive as it sets and monitors the ethical standards of practice, issues teaching certificates, accredits teacher education programs and courses (such as Native Studies) and investigates complaints about members.

In the context of new courses not only does it develop them, but it additionally stipulates the additional qualifications which are required by teachers planning to undertake practice and offering the courses, stating:
“The program content and expected achievement of persons enrolled in the program match the skills and knowledge reflected in the College’s ‘Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession’ and the ‘Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession’ and in the program guidelines issued by the College.”

This is significant, as unlike other jurisdictions such as Australian states and territories, in Ontario, the development of course materials and teacher accreditation is in the hands of teachers not administrators in government departments.

In the case of the newly developed ‘First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies’ course in Ontario, the course guidelines provides it the policy framework for teachers as well as identifying the conceptual framework, key content, understandings and themes which the course contains as well the course expectations and experiences required of teachers in delivering the course.

In order for teachers to be able to teach the course they are required to gain an Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ):

**Certificate of Qualification**

Ontario teachers must be registered with the Ontario College of Teachers or hold an interim Certificate of Qualification. They must hold an acceptable university degree or equivalent in order to teach in Ontario, candidates must have a University degree in the subject to be taught, (for example the Humanities and Social Sciences) and must undertake specific and targeted professional learning in the courses to be taught, In the case of First Nations Studies, teachers must undertake:

- 100 hours online learning
- 25 hours assignments and independent study

In order to teach First Nations Studies in Ontario teachers are required to demonstrate an understanding of the following:

1. **Core sphere of influence**
   - Six senses and multiple intelligences, the four R’s Respect, Responsibility, Relevance and Reciprocity, The Seven Grandfather Teachings and the Great Law of the Peace.

2. **Policies and Guidelines**
   - First Nations policies and expectations, First Nations organisations, policies, guidelines and resources. Political Organisations, Ministry of Education guidelines and Ontario College of Teachers standards.

3. **Course Expectations**
   - That participants critically explore: the self, the creation, the diversity of culture and traditions, the land relationships, the history, the

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70 Ontario College of Teachers: [https://www.oct.ca](https://www.oct.ca)
71 Ontario College of Teachers – Additional Qualifications: [https://www.oct.ca/members/additional-qualifications](https://www.oct.ca/members/additional-qualifications)
72 Ibid.
contributions of First Nations people, education systems, and success stores.

- Teachers are additionally required to critically explore Local celebrations and protocols of First Nations, Knowledge keepers as a resource, Community members as a resource, issues and effects relating to First Nations, treaties and their impact, political systems, Canadian and First Nations.

- Teachers are required to critically explore the following:
  - First Nations pedagogy
  - Relevant First Nations assessment stratagems
  - Teaching strategies that are relevant to and respectful of First Nations concepts, values and ways of learning
  - Develop an understanding of how to develop culturally-appropriate materials which are relevant, based on and respectful of First Nations knowledge.
  - The development of open and continuous relationship and partnership with parents related to their child’s development
  - The development of experiential learning activities that engage with community learning both within and outside of the classroom
  - The integration of First Nations cultural content and perspectives in lesson planning, knowledge creation and teaching practice
  - The utilisation of holistic First Nations conceptual frameworks to assist in curriculum development, lesson planning, content creation and activity preparation.

Teachers are further required to develop knowledge of:

- **Teaching methodology** – the creation and utilisation of First Nations pedagogies to support diverse First Nations learners
- **Cooperative learning**: exploring the significance and importance of the co-creation of knowledge and understanding through collaborative processes
- **Cultural Integration**: utilising First Nations cultural knowledge, protocols and practices, as well as scientific, medical, social, economic and cultural contributions (for example, science of soils and the three sisters,) maple Syrup production) in classroom lessons, integrated units and activities
- **Assessment and reporting**: using fair, relevant and culturally appropriate assessment and reporting mechanisms to assess diverse learners.73

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Accordingly there is a highly detailed and rigorous process which a teacher in Ontario must undertake in order to qualify to teach Native Studies. There must be evidence of engagement, knowledge development, improved efficacy, community engagement, self-reflection and innovation in teaching and learning for a teacher to qualify to teach. This provide a model worthy of consideration on Australia for teachers engaging in First Nations teaching.

This is further underpinned by the previously stated Ontario: ‘Ethical standards for the Teaching Profession’ and ‘The Standards of Practice for the Teaching profession’.74

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https://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/145/599

and

https://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/145/599


PowerPoint: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/1CToolkitRollout.pdf


Within which there are two key documents:

**Great ideas for teaching and learning** as part of the curriculum review process, expectations are being incorporated into many areas of the elementary and secondary curriculum to help teachers bring First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives into the classroom. These documents provide teachers with a handy reference to those expectations contained in revised curricula released as of November, 2007.

Elementary Expectations: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/elemExpectations.html


**Practical teaching strategies:** This series provides teachers with professionally developed teaching strategies created by experts from across Ontario. Each strategy is designed to address one or more curriculum expectations, and many incorporate effective cross-curricular connections. Learn more, and download these resources here:


Making a difference for First Nations learners - The Work of the provincial Schools boards – A case study of Indigenous Engagement

In each of the provinces there are a number of schools Boards responsible for the administration and governance of the schools with their area and who are overseen by a schools superintendent.75

An exemplar of a school board building understanding and capacity in First Nations studies is the Toronto District School Board, which through Aboriginal Education Centre offers a variety of services with the goal of closing the opportunity gap for Aboriginal students. This mandate is approached by infusing Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum for all students as well as by providing direct wrap-around supports to enhance the overall achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. 76

Staffing at the Board’s Aboriginal Education Centre include a Program Coordinator, an itinerant Student Success Teacher, a Child and Youth Counsellor, a Social Worker, an Instructional Leader and Community Liaison Workers who collectively offer a wide range of services, including:

- Family advocacy and connection to community resources
- One-on-one and group itinerant support
- Professional development and support for school staff
- Referrals and student networking within the Aboriginal community

A Facebook page is maintained by the Aboriginal Education Centre.

Toronto has made a specific attempt to ensure First Nations learners are catered for, as outlined below.77:

First Nations Schools

As a tangible commitment to First Nations education the Board has established a small number of schools specifically tailored to First Nations learners. They are:

Kindergarten at First Nations School

The Kindergarten program at First Nations School is a child-centred and culturally relevant. For First Nations people it provides an opportunity for Native children to learn about Anishinabe cultural traditions in a nurturing, caring environment. Children learn within a circle of caring that includes family, caregivers, community and the children themselves.

75 Source: The Toronto District School Board: http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us

76 Source: The Toronto District School Board: http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us

77 Extensive information on the work of the Toronto District School Board in Aboriginal education is available from its website: http://tdsb.on.ca/Community/Aboriginal-Education
Children learn about the teachings and ways of their people through becoming engaged physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually in play based programs that include music, songs, games, stories and dances of Anishinabe culture.

**First Nations School of Toronto**

First Nations Public School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8) is located at 16 Phin Avenue. In 1977, the school was called Wandering Spirit Survival School and was designated as an alternative school. In 1983, the school was recognized by the Toronto Board as a Cultural Survival/Native Way program instead of an alternative school. In 1989, the program was renamed First Nations School of Toronto (FNST).

**School Focus**

The focus of the First Nations School is to offer a tradition-based curriculum that meets the requirements set by the Parent Council, the Toronto District School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education. First Nations Public School is unique in that Native values, spirituality, culture and Ojibwe language are integrated throughout the school curriculum.

The goal is to ensure that urban Native children will have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and the traditional Anishinaabe cultural perspective while acquiring the skills necessary to survive in today’s world. While a large base of the student population of First Nations School is of Anishinaabe ancestry the school welcomes children of all backgrounds.

**Supporting Aboriginal Voices across the Curriculum**

Currently there are approximately 120 students who attend the First Nations School of Toronto. Students of First Nations School of Toronto enjoy a culturally enriched program that incorporates some of the following programs:

- Native Second Language program
- Music: Native traditional singing and drumming
- Dance and movement: Native tradition
- Community feasts

**Supporting Aboriginal Voices across the Curriculum**

Eastview Jr. Public School offers First Nations, Métis and Inuit studies across the curriculum through specific programs and support initiatives such as:

- The Native Second Language Program from Grade 4 to Grade 8 (Ojibwe language)
- Cultures and Traditions Program for all students

**November - Indigenous Education Month**

Indigenous Education Month provides an opportunity to re-examine how Indigenous perspectives, histories and contemporary realities may be centred across the curricula, and to focus on treaties and the legacy of residential schools.
Indigenous education is not just for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, but for all students and staff. When non-Indigenous people learn about the rich histories, cultures and contemporary contexts of diverse Aboriginal peoples, cross-cultural understandings occurs and a common commitment is formed, leading to equitable and more inclusive learning spaces.

The TDSB works actively in consultation with Aboriginal community members, families and organizations as community engagement is crucial to building and strengthening relationships.

One space where this consultation and collaboration takes place is through the Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee. This committee, which meets on a monthly basis, is comprised of First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians and community members who provide guidance, feedback and input on TDSB policies and programs.78

**Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario, November 6-10**

To mark Treaties Recognition Week, the Government of Ontario has been working with Indigenous partners to offer a series of educational resources and events. A dedicated online treaties resource library will be launched on ontario.ca/treaties featuring educational guides, videos and tools developed by Indigenous organisations for teachers and students across the province. 79

**June - National Aboriginal History Month and National Aboriginal Day**

During the month of June, people across Canada mark National Aboriginal History Month in recognition of the rights, histories and achievements of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The unique cultures and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are celebrated nationally and locally.

June 21 is Canada’s National Aboriginal Day. It is held around the time of the summer solstice - the longest day of the year - and is of spiritual significance for many Indigenous peoples.

**Case Study: Port Perry High School, Ontario,**

Based upon the principle of ‘Wildookdadiwin’ ‘Working together and Helping one another’ Port Perry High School within the Durham District School Board on the outskirts of Toronto, Ontario, undertook initiatives to engage with Indigenous culture, Language and Identity within its school in the 2017/2018 academic year

**A First Nations Board Collaborative Inquiry**

A ten week program of learning at Port Perry High School in which there was intentional collaboration with First Nations partners to assist in building student (leadership) and teacher capacity (knowledge and leadership) then student demonstration of increased engagement and sense of pride in (First Nations) identity.

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78 See: Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee at: [http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Community-Advisory-Committees/Aboriginal-Community-Advisory-Committee](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Community-Advisory-Committees/Aboriginal-Community-Advisory-Committee)

79 Toronto District School Board: [http://www.tdsb.on.ca/default.aspx](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/default.aspx)
Cumulating in a Nibi Think Indigenous 2018 demonstration day at the high school where the summation efforts of the school were showcased, including a keynote address and ceremony by First Nations Leaders, seven student lead workshops in areas including drumming, a water protectors workshop, a dialogue with a residential school survivor and experiential drama performances.

Lunches were prepared by Food Studies students using First Nations foodstuffs and recipes and there was an opportunity for students in individual classes across many different discipline areas, to illustrate how they had incorporated Indigenous ways of knowing and being into their learning. An example of this was the High Schools’ senior Business Leadership class demonstrating their work in developing a stronger understanding of Indigenous Leadership leaders and their leadership styles. Another example was the Visual Arts class undertaking work on Indigenous Artists/guest speakers as inspiration for artwork that shows perceptions of society and social issues.

Goals achieved by this project included:

I. High levels of indigenous student engagement
II. Indigenous students expression of their willingness to involve themselves in further events
III. Staff interest in buy-in across learning areas
IV. Strong First Nations’ involvement in planning and execution of the inquiry as well as positive feedback.

Dr. Adam Grover meets with staff of Port Perry High School and Durham District School Board. Image source: Report author
The Province of British Colombia and First Nations Studies


The province of British Colombia, like Ontario, has made a significant commitment to engagement with Indigenous studies and Indigenous students. It has recently updated its curriculum, First Nations Studies and it is embedded within its Social Sciences Curriculum. The work and efforts of the provinces educators and educational leaders give rise to some significant examples of policy and curriculum initiatives to support teachers and learners engage with and achieve in First Nations Studies.

The British Colombia Social Sciences Curriculum

The primary goal of Social Studies education in British Colombia is stated as: ‘to give students the knowledge, skills, and competencies to be active, informed citizens who are able to think critically, understand and explain the perspectives of others, make judgments, and communicate ideas effectively.’

According to the British Colombia Ministry of Education, through their study of historical events, students gain an understanding of the people, places, issues, and events that have shaped the world they live in. By studying some of the many different cultures and ways of life that exist and have existed throughout the world, students will develop both a deeper understanding of the differences between peoples and an appreciation of the aspects of human experience shared across time and space.

It is argued that the social studies curriculum within British Colombia provides students: “with an understanding of their place in the world and the connections between the human and natural environment. The increasing cultural and economic interconnections between societies and the

80 The British Colombia Social Sciences Curriculum: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/curriculum/english/social-studies-curriculum
81 Ibid.
growing awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability make geographic understandings a crucial part of informed citizenship.”

The renewed British Colombia Social Studies Curriculum

First Peoples perspectives

In order to build greater understanding of First Peoples history and culture, the study of these topics and perspectives is embedded throughout all grades in the curriculum. The British Colombia Curricular competencies also ensure that students consider topics from multiple perspectives and are constantly able to question the justification and evidence for interpretations of events and issues.

Focus on inquiry

Throughout the Social Studies curriculum, British Colombia students examine big, open-ended questions so they can make informed decisions. Making an informed decision about an issue requires an understanding of the key historical, geographical, political, economic, and societal factors involved, and how these different factors relate to and interact with each other. Students build these deeper understandings through investigations into interesting, open-ended questions, debating and discussing historical and contemporary issues, and developing and supporting their own hypotheses, solutions, and conclusions.

Big Ideas

Big Ideas represent the “understanding” component of the curriculum model, the deep understandings that students develop as a result of their learning. The Big Ideas are understood through activities that examine Content topics through the use of key disciplinary skills found in the curricular competencies.

Collectively, the Big Ideas progress in sophistication and degree of connection to the lives of students throughout the curriculum. The examples below illustrate how the Big Ideas advance in depth as students’ progress through the curriculum.

Examples of Big Ideas in British Colombia include:

- Our communities are diverse and made of individuals who have a lot in common.
- People from diverse cultures and societies share some common experiences and aspects of life.
- Economic self-interest can be a significant cause of conflict among peoples and governments.
- Disparities in power alter the balance of relationships between individuals and between societies.

See: British Colombia Curriculum Overview: [www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview](http://www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview).

British Colombia Core Competencies: [https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies)

Ibid.
Working with First Peoples Communities

The British Colombia Ministry of Education suggests that it is: “Dedicated to ensuring that the cultures and contributions of First Peoples in British Colombia are reflected in all provincial curricula. To address these topics in the classroom in a way that is accurate and that respectfully reflects First Peoples principles of teaching and learning, teachers are strongly encouraged to seek the advice and support of local First Peoples communities. As First Peoples communities are diverse in terms of language, culture, and available resources, each community will have its own unique protocol for gaining support for integration of local knowledge and expertise.” 85

Meeting with Mr Ted Cadwallader, Provincial Director, Aboriginal Education British Colombia Ministry of Education.

85 Details of the course can be found at: British Colombia Social Sciences Big Ideas and Learning Outcomes: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/10-12/social-studies/en_ss_12_cis_elab.pdf
Key points:

Specific mutually reinforcing governance and policy arrangements have been put in place in British Columbia (BC) to support Indigenous education and student engagement and achievement.

The most significant of this is the British Columbia First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)\(^{86}\) which provides a voice and visibility for First Nations peoples in the development of Provincial education policy and practice. One of the most significant policy documents coming out of the FNSC is the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

**British Colombia First Peoples Principles of Learning.\(^{87}\)**

**Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

This principle refers to the understanding that ultimately, the primary purpose of learning is for well-being. Teaching that does not support the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors, is not considered to be desirable.

**Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)**

This principle reflects the indigenous perspective that everything is interconnected and that education is not separate from the rest of life, and that relationships are vital.

**Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.**

This principle highlights the understanding that each person must take responsibility for his or her actions, and that all actions have consequences. It is understood that actions may have consequences for the individual as well as for others. Given the awareness that we are all related, it is important to think about how one’s actions may affect others (such as family, community, and/or the land). This principle also highlights the need for authentic learning situations, and the need for learner autonomy, as recognizing the consequences of one’s own actions can only genuinely occur when the learner has made autonomous choices.

**Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.**

This principle reflects the understanding that teaching and learning is the responsibility of all members of a community. The responsibility for teaching belongs to everyone in the community. As people develop their skills and knowledge in particular areas it is expected that they will in turn teach others. This is seen as a responsibility that ultimately strengthens communities. Conversely, the responsibility for learning also lies with the learner. It is the responsibility of the learner to determine what he or she is supposed to learn from any given situation. For example, a learner may be told a story that is intended to help the learner learn something. Rather than being explicitly told what the lesson is, the learner must figure that out.

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\(^{86}\) British Columbia First Nations Education Steering Committee: [http://www.fnesc.ca/](http://www.fnesc.ca/)

\(^{87}\) British Columbia First Peoples Principles of Learning: [https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/](https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/)
for him or herself. This process allows learners to develop understandings that are applicable to them personally, and that they see as relevant for a specific time and place. It also promotes personal responsibility for learning.

**Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.**

This principle reflects the understanding that Indigenous peoples hold an extensive wealth of knowledge, even if this knowledge has not always been recognized by post-industrial Eurocentric cultures. It also recognizes that Indigenous knowledge contributes to the non-Indigenous understandings in the world. As one example, educators are now growing in their understanding that the First Peoples Principles of Learning represent a highly effective approach to education that, among other things, supports deep learning, inclusivity, and responding to learners’ needs.88

**Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.**

As discussed earlier in this report, in First Nations cultures, knowledge was traditionally kept in an oral tradition. The oral tradition, still highly valued, includes oral narratives (or stories) that are used to teach skills, transmit cultural values and mores, convey news, record family and community histories, and explain our natural world. In addition to expressing spiritual and emotional truth (e.g., via symbol and metaphor), story provides a record of literal truth (e.g., regarding events and/or situations). This tradition (both content and process) helps to create the learners’ concept of the world. The emphasis on history and story help learners to organize new concepts that develop from their learning.

**Learning involves patience and time.**

This principle directly supports the idea that learning is an individualistic process that cannot be rushed or arrived at according to a pre-determined schedule (including specific age). This refers to the understanding that learning happens when a person is ready for it, and that learning is most effective when it occurs in a setting where the learning can be applied in an authentic context. The need for patience and time is also a requirement to develop thorough understandings of concepts, rather than surface level familiarity. In order to develop understanding, information needs to be examined/explored from multiple perspectives, in different contexts, and over time.

In First Nations contexts this understanding of learning is also the result of the cultural value of collaboration and developing consensus. Collaboration requires that all people in a group contribute according to their specific skill sets, or “gifts”. Through collaboration group members also learn from each other.89

**Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.**

This principle reflects the importance of identity in relation to learning. Identity is what connects people to each other, to communities, and to the land. The exploration of one’s identity includes developing an understanding of one’s place in the world in addition to being

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88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
able to identify all the factors that contribute to how people see themselves. These factors include people’s strengths and their challenges, their innate abilities (gifts) and capacity to learn. In addition to using this understanding to help one grow in life, knowing one’s own strengths and challenges is a part of the responsibility a person has to his or her family and community, as a people are considered to have a duty to use them to contribute to others (family, community and land).

In First Nations communities, the emphasis on identity is overtly reflected in the practice of people traditionally situating themselves in relation to their family, community, and the land.

**Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations**

Whether or not knowledge is shared depends on the type of knowledge, who holds that knowledge, and the context. Some knowledge is freely shared, while other knowledge is not. Some knowledge is held by specific people, families, clans or communities, and permission must be gained from the holder(s) before it is shared. An example of this are some narratives or “stories” that cannot be retold unless permission is given by the person, family, clan, or nation to whom the story belongs. Being told a story is not implicit permission to retell it, such as reading a story from another culture does not mean one can rewrite it as one’s own.

There is knowledge within various First Nations communities that is not intended to be shared with people who are not members of the community. These may include specific ceremonial practices that incorporate songs and dances that belong to specific people or families. Many First Nations have long house teachings that happen in traditional ways and these teachings are honoured by not sharing them with people who are not a part of the process.

These principles individually and collectively have implications for classrooms and schools, it is understood that an inherent interconnectedness exists between all of the principles. While they are described discretely, they operate in concert with each other in and robust and healthy learning environment and education system.  

The British Colombia curriculum allows Indigenous students to see themselves in the policy development process as well as validating their ontology and epistemology in classroom practice, as a consequence of the adoption of the principles in schools. It is suggested that the development of a similar document for educators, students, communities and policy makers would have considerable valuable in the Tasmanian and Australian context. Importantly as with other Canadian documents it has been co-constructed with First Nations communities.

**Other key resources supporting First Nations education in British Colombia:**

Authentic First Peoples Resources (K-9). These resources are intended to help BC educators introduce resources that reflect First Peoples knowledge and perspectives into classrooms in

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90 Source: British Colombia First Peoples Principles of Learning: [https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/](https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/)

91 Ibid.
respective ways. The inclusion of authentic First Peoples content into classrooms supports all students in developing an understanding of the significant place of First Peoples within the historical and contemporary fabric of this province and provides culturally relevant materials for Indigenous learners in British Columbia. 92

**Integrated Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives**

The development of a (draft) Integrated Aboriginal Worldviews and perspectives’ document and an ‘Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the classroom’ document by the British Colombia Ministry of Education is highly innovative and should be replicated in Australia. 93

**The Role of the British Colombia College of Teachers**

Similar to Ontario, the British Colombia College of Teachers has an active and important role in the development of standards and requisite qualifications for teachers within the province. Importantly it stipulates that in order for both undergraduates to enter and postgraduates to complete their teaching training programmes, that they must undertake studies in First Nations curriculum and pedagogy. Such an approach ensures that all educators have both an awareness of and the professional competence, to engage with First Nations studies. Such a requirement could be adopted in Australian jurisdictions as well. Such an adoption would, in a manner to the BC experience, both validate the importance of First Nations studies within the teaching profession and the wider community more generally, as well as ensuring that all teachers, irrespective of their academic specialisation, was competent to engage with First Nations content and pedagogy. 94

**Professional Standards for Educators in British Colombia** 95

The BC Standards for Educators communicate to teachers and the public the work of educators - what they know, what they are able to do, and how they serve the public. The standards outline

92 See: First Nations Education steering committee First Peoples Resources:  http://www.fnesc.ca/k-7/

93 See: British Colombia Ministry of Education - Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/aboriginal-education/awp-moving_forward.pdf

and watch: Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom Moving Forward

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZjshXqEk8o

And

The Indigenous world view vs. Western world view

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsh-NcZyui&t=159s

94 See British Colombia Ministry of Education Teacher Regulation Branch: http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/

the requirements of the profession and provide the foundation on which educators can grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish their work.

In order to be issued a teaching certificate, Section 30 of the British Columbia Teachers Act requires that a person meet certain standards, in respect to a certificate of qualification or independent school teaching certificate. Applicants must also be of good moral character and otherwise fit and proper to be issued a certificate of qualification or an independent school teaching certificate.

There are two sets of standards for conduct and competency. The standards that apply to an educator depend on the type of certificate the teacher holds.

**Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Colombia**

Established by the British Columbia Teachers' Council for individuals who hold a certificate of qualification.

**Independent School Teacher Conduct and Competence Standards**

Established by the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee for individuals who hold an independent school certificate.

The Current Standards are:  

1. **Educators value and care for all students and act in their best interests.**

   Educators are responsible for fostering the emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, physical, social and vocational development of students. They are responsible for the emotional and physical safety of students. Educators treat students with respect and dignity. Educators respect the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities. Educators have a privileged position of power and trust. They respect confidentiality unless disclosure is required by law. Educators do not abuse or exploit students or minors for personal, sexual, ideological, material or other advantage.

2. **Educators are role models who act ethically and honestly.**

   Educators act with integrity, maintaining the dignity and credibility of the profession. They understand that their individual conduct contributes to the perception of the profession as a whole. Educators are accountable for their conduct while on duty, as well as off duty, where that conduct has an effect on the education system. Educators have an understanding of the education system in BC and the law as it relates to their duties.

3. **Educators understand and apply knowledge of student growth and development.**

   Educators are knowledgeable about how children develop as learners and as social beings, and demonstrate an understanding of individual learning differences and special needs. This

96 Ibid.
knowledge is used to assist educators in making decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment and classroom management.

4. **Educators value the involvement and support of parents, guardians, families and communities in schools.**

Educators understand, respect and support the role of parents and the community in the education of students. Educators communicate effectively and in a timely manner with parents and consider their advice on matters pertaining to their children.

5. **Educators implement effective practices in areas of classroom management, planning, instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting.**

Educators have the knowledge and skills to facilitate learning for all students and know when to seek additional support for their practice. Educators thoughtfully consider all aspects of teaching, from planning through reporting, and understand the relationships among them. Educators employ a variety of instructional and assessment strategies.

6. **Educators have a broad knowledge base and understand the subject areas they teach.**

Educators understand the curricular, conceptual and methodological foundations of education and of the subject areas they teach. Educators must be able to communicate effectively in English or French. Educators teach students to understand relevant curricula in a Canadian, Aboriginal, and global context. Educators convey the values, beliefs and knowledge of our democratic society.

7. **Educators engage in career-long learning.**

Educators engage in professional development and reflective practice, understanding that a hallmark of professionalism is the concept of professional growth over time. Educators develop and refine personal philosophies of education, teaching and learning that are informed by theory and practice. Educators identify their professional needs and work to meet those needs individually and collaboratively.

8. **Educators contribute to the profession.**

Educators support, mentor or encourage other educators and those preparing to enter the profession. Educators contribute their expertise to activities offered by their schools, districts, professional organizations, post-secondary institutions or contribute in other ways.\(^{97}\)

**Reflection on Canadian Standards - Strengthening Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principals**

Australian professional standards are set by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).\(^{98}\) The standards comprise seven domains and while there is reference to

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\(^{98}\) The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership: [https://www.aitsl.edu.au/](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/)
demonstrating understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Standard 2.4) there is considerable scope for this to be strengthened and made more prominent in the Australian standards.

**Recommendation:**

Consideration could be given in the Australian context to the adoption of an additional area of professional focus which replicates the work being undertaken in British Colombia to mandate that Aboriginal Perspectives and Knowledge become an explicit focus area for both professional knowledge (Domain 1) professional practice. (Domain 2) and professional engagement (Domain 3)

**Assessment reform in First Nations Education in British Colombia**

Consistent with Indigenous pedagogy, there is a shift away from ‘high stakes’ summative assessment within British Colombia. Such forms of assessment are seen to be at odds with communal, interpersonal and discourse approaches preferred by indigenous communities and the interdisciplinary and inquiry based learning which has been established as better reflecting an indigenous episteme. As such it is recommended that in the Australian context that, where possible, high stakes summative assessments are avoided in First Nations studies both as a reflection of Indigenous episteme, and as a elect of the indigenisation of curriculum and pedagogy.

**Unfinished Business – Racism and Indigenous engagement and achievement in British Colombia**

One matter that arose in discussions with British Colombia Ministry staff was the not uncommon bias amongst educators towards First Nations students. This was described as the process by which (white) teachers would have lower academic expectations of First Nations students, would be more likely to pay more attention to non-Indigenous children and their concerns in class, and be less likely to follow up in respect to absenteeism and non-submission of work from Indigenous students. This was summed up in the phrase; ‘the Racism of low expectations’.

Addressing the legitimate learning needs of Indigenous students, holding them accountable for their learning and paying attention to them in class is no less, in fact it is perhaps more, important a responsibility for teachers. The phenomenon, as described in British Colombia, of effectively having two sets of standards, expectations and rules for Indigenous students, has in effect, institutionalised and normalised a form of racism which, as it was suggested, serves the Indigenous student, the student body as a whole, or the profession of teaching. It is recommended that steps must be explicitly taken to ensure that the culture of low expectations is addressed and eliminated.

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Key Institutions and Policies supporting First Nations Education in British Colombia

First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)

FNESC is unique in that there is not a comparable organization in other provinces across Canada. It has grown out of the needs of BC First Nations.100

Aboriginal Enhancements Schools Network (AESPN), a part of the Network of Inquiry and Innovation (NOII).

An exemplary practice in improving outcomes for Aboriginal learners, the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network deepens learning through inquiry, innovation and teamwork. The network is paired with the Network of Innovation and Inquiry for the sharing of resources and learning opportunities.

The AESN helps selected schools across British Columbia in taking an inquiry-oriented, evidence-based approach to learning and teaching — one that focuses on making education more equitable by providing high-quality learning opportunities to all young people. Participating schools develop a focus to address through their inquiry, collaborate with colleagues through regional meetings and share case studies. Significantly the inquiry process is one that applies a specific and open inquiry approach, called ‘The Spiral of Inquiry’ it allows teachers to undertake guided inquiry as to what makes education work for Indigenous learners by asking the three questions ‘What is going on for our learners?, How do we know?, and Why does this matter?’101

The success of this approach to teacher engagement and a focus on teaching and learning improvements based in inquiry and critical reflection has proven to be highly successful in British Colombia. As quoted in a recent Networks of Inquiry and Innovation and ASEN Newsletter:

“The AESN creates an inquiry community where everyone learns and works together to ensure that every Aboriginal learner crosses the stage with dignity, purpose and options — and that together we eliminate racism in schools.”102

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100 British Columbia First Nations Education Steering Committee: http://www.fnesc.ca/
102 See: University of British Colombia: Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Networks https://ikblic.ubc.ca/initiatives/aesn/
**Immersive land-Based Indigenous Experience**

Vancouver Island University

3—7 June 2018

Hosted by:

Laurie Meijer Dress, Chair First Nations Studies Department, Vancouver Island University

*Undergraduate students participating in First Nations learning about waterways, Vancouver Island. Image source: Report author*

**Background**

The Vancouver Island University First Nations Studies Program is a community-based program founded in 1993 as a special and unique collaborative initiative involving Vancouver Island University (then Malaspina University College), the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, Sna Naw As First Nation, Nuu Chah Nulth Tribal Council, and Kwakwaka’wakw communities for the purposes of:
• providing access for local Indigenous students to advanced educational opportunities;
• creating a culturally responsive context for Indigenous students to participate in postsecondary education;
• addressing the need to increase Indigenous student success and completion at the postsecondary level;
• formalizing an Indigenous community presence on campus;
• assuring a multi-cultural teaching and learning environment;
• co-developing a curriculum subject to community input and vetting.103

This program is an attempt to achieve "Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education" in a public, postsecondary institution. The British Colombia Ministry of Advanced Education provided special funding in order to create the space, which was unique (and remains so) in Canada. Unlike other Native Studies programs, this program intentionally oriented itself toward its founding communities. First Nations Studies at VIU is a community-based program founded as a collaborative initiative between VIU and local Indigenous communities. It is characterised by a number of distinguishing features”104

Elders in the classroom

Elders are essential to the First Nations Studies program and are equal teaching partners in classrooms. Elders guide curriculum development and are facilitators of life-long learning by teaching and modelling responsibility and relationship building within family, community, and the greater world.

Class Projects

First Nations Studies courses feature activities in all courses that constitute experiential learning, both in the classroom and on the land. Students are asked every day to “do” and participate in actions that shift their attitudes and perceptions.105

Insights applicable to First Nations Curriculum and Pedagogy arising from my involvement in Land-Based learning:

There was clear evidence of the very deep connection between VIU and the First Nations Studies program with the local (Nanaimo) community. It felt as if the program was an extension of the community and reflective of its aspirations and values in First Nations issues. This set a really strong basis for both collaborative learning and high levels of First Nations involvement from students, elders and community members.

I observed that Land-Based Education was beneficial and consistent with Indigenous ontology and epistemology in the following ways:

- It demonstrates the close and ongoing connection between First Nations people and the land, and the land as an active and responsive teacher.

103 Ibid.
104 Vancouver Island University First Nations Studies Program https://ah.viu.ca/indigenous-xwulmuxw-studies/program
105 Ibid.
o It is premised on custodianship, natural balance, ecological considerations and empathy.
o It affirms to students that Indigenous peoples are ‘of’ the earth, not from it, nor owners of it.
o It reinforces the intrinsic and extrinsic value of communal learning and of communal solidarity.
o It encourages mindfulness and reflective practice.
o In a practical way it demonstrates the necessity of intergenerational learning as knowledge of the environment and foods, medicines and tools derived from it, must be passed down from one generation to the next, otherwise it is lost.
o It places the natural world at the centre of the education process, not texts or teachers.
o It closely links Indigenous cosmology and spirituality to land, air and waterways, and makes real for students these connections.
o It provides unrivalled opportunities for story-telling and story sharing, which are at the heart of Indigenous learning.
o It builds group interaction, interrelationships and harmony and the necessity of team efforts and reliance, which reflects Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
o It demonstrates that long-term planning and group interaction are required to achieve goals, which reflects Indigenous realities.
o It demonstrates that learning is not limited to the cognitive domain but is of the heart and hand too. 106
o It provides meaningful opportunities for Learners to engage with all six senses (sight, smell, touch, hear, and spiritually based intuition) as well as the domains of multiple intelligence (logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, naturalistic, existential and ethical.)
o It provides for culturally respectful and inclusive learning spaces, both on Country and on return to the classroom.
o It illustrates the diversity of effective teaching and learning styles available to meet the needs of all students.
o It addresses key priorities for all learners of global stewardship and sustainability.
o It addresses six of the seven the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities (literacy, numeracy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding) and two of the three cross-curriculum priorities (Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.)
o It validates and celebrates the wisdom of elders and First Nations leaders as educators.
o It indigenises classroom practice, for example the adoption of yarning circles, the sharing of classroom responsibilities, the affirmation of communal and

106 A reminder of the importance of the differing domains of learning in particular of the Heart is: Sir Ken Robinson - Educating the Heart and Mind: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1A4OgIKV30
consensual efforts towards goal attainment and the importance of deep questioning and reflection.

- It provides for learns to understand the episteme of Indigenous peoples in a rich and authentic way.
- It demonstrates to students that learning can be enjoyable and challenging in a previously unimagined way.

The totality of land based learning validates First Nations perspectives, actively demonstrates First Nations ways of being and knowing and provides a transformative approach to pedagogy for both Indigenous and non-indigenous students alike. *For the reasons outlined above, it should be actively engaged with as part of Indigenous and non-Indigenous curriculum reform in Australia.*
Student comments arising from their immersive land-based Learning: Vancouver Island University June 2018.

“Anything important done, is done from the heart”

“I learnt to be an ally, not a bystander”

“You learn to be practical, to help someone by doing something”

“It was more than learning; it was a healing circle”

“The most important learning is from the head to the heart”

“I learnt what it is to be in community and this will help me”

“It was big work that could only be done as a group”

“We learnt to walk on the land with knowledge and joy”

“The learning was not paternalistic: it is about sharing and giving up knowledge to each other”

“I have a yearning to learn more and do more”

“The stories contained energy and life”

“The teachings are not a checklist, but are seeds that have taken root”

“I feel obliged to share the knowledge to improve the world”

“We learnt to walk in two worlds”
British Colombia - In Conclusion:

The indigenisation of schools and policymakers in British Colombia is impressive. Curriculum reform, professional registration standards, and registration for teachers, leadership structures, the work of district school boards, support for language’s, bicultural committee and governance arrangements and principles of school practice which embody Indigenous epistemology and ontology are all distinctive features of the BC education system and in concert, meaningfully allow for First Nations engagement and student attainment. There is much here for Tasmania, and Australian educators to model their own work on.107

Concluding remarks - Canada

Success in Canadian First Nations education occurs when:

- There are high levels of teacher efficacy, who are sufficiently trained, prepared and professionally prepared to engage with First Nations educational issues and students and who enjoy the confidence of students and families.
- Where community, family and other key stakeholders are actively engaged in their youths education.
- Where First Nations culture, language and identity is acknowledged, respected and proposed.
- Where a focus on the development of the whole person is achieved, culturally, artistically, academically and socially.
- Where sufficient funding is provided by government.
- Where there is a political culture of acceptance, respect recognition and mutual understanding.
- Where governments have taken leadership in achieving institutional and policy reform in areas of treaty, truth telling, recognition and cultural promotion.
- Where high quality teaching and learning materials are produced and readily available to teachers.
- Where members of the First Nations are engaged within the teaching and teacher support professions and are teaching both Indigenous and non-indigenous students both First Nations history, culture and identity.

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107 For a further look on steps that educational authorities and institutions can and have made in Canada to indigenous the broader education sector, with parallels to efforts which could be made in Australia, see: University Affairs: Indigenizing the academy

https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/indigenizing-the-academy/
Finland in Detail

Dates Visited: 22-28 June 2018

Lake near Inari, Finland. Image source: Report author.

To the nature I take my sorrow and bring back peace

Oda Liv Koivisto, 2016

Visits to The Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi) and Siida – The National Museum of the Finnish Sámi

Context The First Nations of the North - the Sámi peoples of Scandinavia

The Sámi people live in four countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The total population in these four countries is approximately 80,000.
The place of Sámi in Scandinavian society.

“Support the Lapps in all ways, mould them into moral, sober and just sufficiently educated people, but don't let them sip from the cup of civilization, for it will never be more than a sip. It has never and will never be a blessing. Lapp should remain Lapp”\(^{108}\)

Spread across four sovereign states; Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland, and one of 70 circumpolar peoples residing within the Arctic circle, the Sámi have experienced a number of historical turning points. In terms of prominence the Sámi have been historically marginalised in part because of the impermanence of their nomadic lifestyle, their spread across national borders, their migration patterns and their roles as principally Reindeer herders and in part because of their geographic isolation. Historically it is not too strong to argue that the Sámi, like other First Nations in other parts of the world, were seen as ‘uncivilized’ and in need of a more formal education, which would impart morals and religion. Attempts were made to institutionalise and assimilate Sámi children, again as in other settler states, by means such as the exclusion of their language from their education, their traditional ways of life – such as not participating in reindeer husbandry and by frequent separation from their families. However over time assimilation failed and the Sámi while losing significant political and economic autonomy, have gradually been given a higher degree of cultural and economic autonomy, in particular in Sweden, Finland and Norway. That being said it is important note that while provisions are increasing focus on privileging Sámi with culturally appropriate education, there is no meaningful evidence to suggest attempts to include Sámi ways of knowing and being, their history and their culture in mainstream schools in these countries.

Sámi Language

The Sámi people speak a language that is a member of the Uralic linguistic group along with languages such as Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian. A total of nine different but closely related Sámi languages are spoken in the Sámi region. Today, three of these dialects are in active use in Northern Norway. Sámi people from the south of Northern Norway can talk effortlessly to their nearest Sámi neighbours in Sweden, but cannot communicate with Sámi people from the far north. The dialect boundaries do not follow the linguistic borders, however, as most of the dialects are spoken in multiple countries. The Sámi language is currently the major language and is also used in small communities in most parts of Northern Norway as well as in some environments in the Northern Norwegian towns.\(^{109}\)

Sámi Ways of living and cultural expression

Reindeer herding is a major pursuit of the Sámi peoples as is fishing, livestock farming and hunting, and tourism pursuits. These forms of work are both a means of economic prosperity, but in the case of many such as hunting and herding, are a form of cultural expression. Even in those cases where the Sámi have moved away from traditional lands, the traditional economic and cultural activities are frequently still practiced. Other highly distinctive forms of Sámi cultural practice are Joik, a form of singing (and one of the oldest song traditions in Europe) as

\(^{108}\) University of Texas – Sámi Culture: [http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm)

\(^{109}\) Ibid.
well as Duoddji which comprises the "kofte"; the very colourful traditional Sámi clothing, as well as Duoddji in the form of the Sámi cultural traditions of craftsmanship such as tin embroidery, pearl embroidery, weaving shoelaces, jacket seams, wood carving and knife-making. As Sámi culture has evolved traditional joik is being blended with modern rhythms. There is a Sámi National Theatre, and a renewal of Sámi literature, media and broadcasting using the Sámi language.110

Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi) building, Inari Finland

Political status of the Sámi

The Sámi have a unique political status compared with that of other First Nations internationally. There exists three Sámi Parliaments, one each in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In Finland the Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi) is the self-government body of the Sámi and the functions of the Parliament are regulated through the National Act on the Sámi Parliament. Its main purpose is to plan and implement the cultural self-government guaranteed to the Sámi as an indigenous people by the Finnish Constitution. The Sámi Parliament functions under the administrative sector of the Finnish Ministry of Justice. The Sámi Parliament represents the Sámi in national and international forums and deals with the issues concerning Sámi language, culture, and matters relating to their status as an indigenous people. The Sámi Parliament can make initiatives, proposals and statements to the National Government. The 21 members, and four deputies, are elected among the Sámi every four years. Due to its representative nature, the Sámi Parliament expresses an official view of the Sámi in Finland on the issues concerning them, however the National parliament is not bound by its decisions.111

While the Parliaments are advisory in nature only are significant for two reasons. Firstly they are a recognition of the distinctive, different and separate nature of the Sámi peoples and their interests, and they additionally represent an acknowledgement of the national status of the Sámi

110 Ibid.
111 Sami in Finland: http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/web/document/sami/an/1/1.html
and the importance of ‘nation to nation’ political representation in Scandinavia. So while the governments of Sweden, Norway and Finland have ultimate executive powers the Sámi representative bodies do have delegated authority on issues concerning culture, cultural heritage, reindeer farming and education. Control over lands is less delegated as sovereign states have not historically recognised Sámi prior ownership of their lands (in part because of the nomadic process of reindeer herding) rather arguing that it belongs to the respective states, however more recently, in particular in Norway transfers of ownership are being more seriously considered. This being said ultimate and executive authority for land use and resource extraction resides with the respective National governments, which is an ongoing area of concern for the Sámi. 112

The role of the Finnish Sámi Parliament and Sámi education

The Sámi Parliament has a range of responsibilities as an advisory body to the national parliament. One of which is the advancement of teaching of the Sámi language, culture, and teaching in Sámi.

The Educational Committee prepares the political proposals, initiatives, statements and comments concerning education for the Sámi Parliament. The committee is in charge of planning, preparing and distributing learning material in Sámi.113

The purpose of the committee is to advance Sámi students’ “rights for their own language and for receiving teaching in it, as well as the position of Sámi education in the Finnish educational system.”114 The committee participates in the co-operation of Sámi education on the regional, national, and Nordic level. The committee decides on the usage of the Finnish government subsidy which is aimed at developing Sámi learning material and teaching. Further the committee prepares the annual and long-term plans about the production of learning material. In addition, the committee is in charge of the annual young Sámi art event (Sámenuoraid dáiddadáhpáhus) which is organized in co-operation with the municipalities and associations in the Sámi homeland region, and constitutes an art and culture event for children and young people.

The issues covered by the committee are prepared and implemented by the Sámi Parliament Educational Office. The Sámi Parliament educational committee and the educational office co-operate with the municipalities in the Sámi region, with other organisers of events, equivalent Nordic bodies, and with the educational administration of the Finnish state. The Sámi Parliament represents the voice of the Sámi in educational politics. The Parliament argues that

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114 Ibid.
‘The position of the Sámi language and culture in teaching is one of the most important questions regarding the future of the Sámi.’

The Sámi language has been a part of the school curriculum since the mid-1970s for pupils in northern Finland. All comprehensive and upper secondary schools within the Sámi Homeland area provide education in the Sámi language. The majority of teaching in Sámi takes place in the comprehensive grades 1-6. Outside the Sámi region, there is little teaching of the Sámi language or of Sámi history and culture.

The Sámi language can be the language for teaching, a first language subject, or an elective foreign language subject. According to law, Sámi-speaking pupils living in the Sámi Homeland have the right to receive the majority of their primary education in the Sámi language. The regulations apply for all three Sámi languages spoken in Finland: Inari, Skolt, and North Sámi. The Sámi language exams can be taken in the matriculation which is otherwise in Finnish.115

**Sámi Pedagogy**

As we discussed in relation to the situation in New Zealand and Canada, approaching pedagogy with a clear focus on indigenous ways of knowing and being has proven to me the most successful approach, this is no different with respect to the Sámi.

**Sámi Learning and Education**

The Sámi people are one of the oldest semi-nomadic indigenous groups in the world. Traditionally herding reindeer in the Arctic regions of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia’s Kola Peninsula (the region is known as Sapmi), they learned to work with the rhythms of nature in order to survive the harsh climate, this has had a profound effect on their thinking, way of living and holistic education practices.

As we have found with other First Nations in Canada and New Zealand, the Sámi’s own worldview invites communal, experiential learning rather than the more hierarchical Western pedagogical strategies. Newly acquired knowledge fits into and is consistent with previously existing frameworks – frameworks which are formed on the basis of one’s experience, necessity and cultural background. The discrepancy between the Western approach to learning and education and the one used by the Sámi reflects the Sámi’s approach to understanding the world, and the social and practical environment in which they have traditionally lived.

**Differing Worldviews – Differing pedagogy**

In the traditional Sámi worldview, no distinction is made between human and nature. All things in nature have a soul and personality. Therefore, a disruption of the wilderness is a disturbance to these souls, so individuals are expected to move through nature without disturbing it (Yli-Kuha). Further, life is cyclic, with no beginning and no end, a concept that rises out of an intimate connection with nature. This is very different from the Western idea that everything is discrete. That is, each chronological event has a beginning, middle, and an end. One’s worldview is critically important when considering the acquisition of knowledge. An

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115 Ibid.
individual's new knowledge is inevitably coloured by her previous knowledge and beliefs. A modern Sámi, Elina Helander, explains how Sámi knowledge differs from that of a Westerner:

“The Sámi also possess knowledge that Western Culture does not acknowledge as valid knowledge. A person is able to comprehend things in their totality, in a flash. But what the “flash” is, where it comes from, and what its contents are, is difficult to explain succinctly on the basis of the Western system of knowledge. Sámi knowledge is immediate in the sense that living as they do within the cyclical, nomadic circle of life, the Sámi occasionally land in situations where they can free their thoughts and open themselves up to reality without observing it consciously. A person can become part of reality without having to construct it first.” 116

Accordingly the process of learning for Sámi is bound with nature, the requirements of survival and of sustaining community relationships. Learning happens initially in the family and then as part of a broader community. The importance of knowledge transference and pedagogy which shows respect for, and an interconnectedness with nature, and its influence on social order, laws and communal life and solidary cannot be understated.

For a Sámi child, the way a parent transmits knowledge is fundamentally different from the way a Western parent might do so. Whenever possible, they are given opportunities to observe and be a part of the things they are to learn about. In the words of Elena Helander:

“Sámi traditional culture is largely based on observations. Many parents’ method of upbringing is based on the notion that children make observations themselves, trusting that they will draw their own conclusions instead of being taught everything by means of direct communication.” 117

Sámi children are expected to learn through experience. They spend a large portion of time observing their parents and are able to ask questions. Active participation begins early on. Story telling is another common element in the construction of knowledge for the Sámi as it is for other First Nations peoples. When Sámi children are taught, they are taught indirectly through storytelling. Storytelling serves multiple purposes. Not only is it a channel for the transmission of cultural folklore, values, and tradition, but also it allows children to learn without being taught. They can bring their own experience into their interpretation of the story and come to conclusions without someone telling them just what they should be learning. Sámi oral tradition is a large part of childhood education at home:

“I am a typical offshoot of the oral tradition. All the things that we were taught were through a story…Our mother did not do anything without telling a story about it….All situations were occasions for stories.” 118

116 Source: Sami Culture: Sami Learning and Education: http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm
117 Ibid.
118 Source: Sami Culture: Sami Learning and Education: http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm
In keeping with the Sámi worldview, storytelling style is nonlinear. Eino Gutorm describes the traditional storytelling style as, “indirect, twisting, and turning”\textsuperscript{119}. Being direct and to-the-point is not a part of Sámi communication style. This non-linear approach is distinctly non-Western, and shares commonality with Canadian First Peoples and Māori traditions of knowing and learning. Another pedagogical focus is that of practicality. Whatever a child learns about should be able to be translated to some utilitarian purpose. Only when that individual gains expertise in the practical aspects can they begin to diverge into learning in the arts\textsuperscript{120}.

**Contemporary Sámi Issues I**

**Sámi turning away from Sámi education?**

Interestingly, while Indigenous materials and schools become more available, Sámi participation seems to be declining. According to a University of Texas study the majority of Sámi parents feel that their child may be at a disadvantage if they attend Sámi schools. Consequently, less than 10% of all Sámi children overall attend Sámi school programs, though these children do continue to use the Sámi language later on\textsuperscript{121}. The growing need to be able to live and function in a modern technological (and global) society inevitably makes minority languages less useful. At the end of the 1980’s, and again at the beginning of the 1990’s, a study was conducted among Swedish Sámi about the proficiency of the Sámi language among Sámi-educated children. Results indicated that language instruction was on the whole unsuccessful and that there was an ongoing shift from the use of Sámi to the use of Swedish. This reality begs the question of whether the Sámi movement came too late. The Sámi had already assimilated widely by the time they gained political rights to a Sámi education\textsuperscript{122}.

**Contemporary Sámi Issues II**

**The provision of Sámi education in non-Sámi Schools and teacher attitudes and preparedness**

It appears that little effort is made across Scandinavia to include Sámi history, culture or contemporary challenges into the mainstream curriculum. Nor is there evidence that Sámi pedagogy reflective of their ways of being and knowing are influencing Scandinavian schools, further, there Sámi and Sámi knowledge are undervalued in Scandinavian society. In a recent Norwegian study of 817 pupils who answered a questionnaire about what they know about

\textsuperscript{119} E. Helander & Kaarina Kailo. No beginning, no end: the Sámi speak up. Edmonton, Canadian circumpolar institute : in cooperation with the Nordic Sámi institute Finland, 1998. P.67

\textsuperscript{120} For an insight into the close relationship between the practicalities of Sámi life and learning see: Arctic ancestral survivalism: on extreme weather Sámi wisdom:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoXbDhDEgdg

Text modified from: Sami Culture: Sami Learning and Education
http://www.laits.utexas.edu/Sámi/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm

\textsuperscript{121}  http://www.laits.utexas.edu/Sámi/diehtu/newera/learn-edu.htm

\textsuperscript{122} See:Sami Parliament of Finland: https://www.samediggi.fi/
Sámi people, the results suggested that there was a very low level of knowledge, surprisingly even amongst those teachers working in northern schools where there is a high concentration of Sámi students. Further the study found that many of the teachers in the far north have negative attitudes toward the Sámi’s and all of the 190 teachers who answered the survey gave the wrong answer to the question of whether the Sámi comprise a nation of their own. There is no overall plan on teaching about the Sámi, while some universities have some responsibility for Sámi education there appears no overall plan about how they work on teaching about the Sámi. It’s up to the individual teacher to decide how much emphasis to give to Sámi issues.

In 2007 the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training issued a pamphlet – Gávnos – about the Sámi content of the Knowledge Promotion campaign for all teachers in Norway. However its application is not mandatory in Norwegian schools.  

**Contemporary Sámi Issues III**

**The University of Tromsø Centre for Sámi Studies**

One positive initiative to better integrate Sámi into the education sector in Scandinavia is the Norwegian University of Tromso Centre for Sámi Studies, The Centre is described as being “at the forefront of Sámi advocacy, research, sustainability studies, education, and cultural preservation.” The University offers specialized degrees, hosts lectures, steers committees, holds forums, provides multilingual courses, and awards grants to scholars and organizations. Much of their efforts are aimed specifically at sustaining and studying the Sámi culture.

Recent initiatives to improve understating of and participation of Sámi include a Masters degree in indigenous studies, fellowships, and a comprehensive study of reindeer husbandry and the threats facing this way of life. The program offers comparative perspectives on issues faced by the Sámi and other indigenous groups. Additionally the University, in concert with the Arctic University of Norway runs a two-year-long reindeer husbandry program, which strives to “thoroughly evaluate reindeer herding and husbandry in relation to economic and cultural sustainability in the Arctic, with particular emphasis on the experience and situation of indigenous peoples.” In Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Alaska, surveys and assessments of reindeer husbandry examine national and local economic and social conditions, management issues and the legal status of reindeer husbandry. Such activity validates Sámi

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124 The efforts of the Sámi Education Institute in meeting the educational needs of the Sámi Area, in order to maintain and develop Sámi culture and nature-based occupations, and to promote the production of educational material published in Sami is critically important in addition to its programme in Reindeer Husbandry it offers vocational qualifications which validate and continue First Nations identity, community and culture, in courses including:

- Vocational Qualification in Natural and environmental protection
- Study Programme in Nature-based Services, Entrepreneur in Nature-based Production
- Vocational Qualification in Crafts and design Study programme in in Handicraft Design and Production,
- Study programme in Gemstones and precious metals

See: [https://www.uarctic.org/member-profiles/finland/8718/sami-education-institute](https://www.uarctic.org/member-profiles/finland/8718/sami-education-institute)
culture and identity and provides a mechanism for both Indigenous and Non-indigenous peoples to gain higher education credentials.  

**Contemporary Sámi Issues IV**

**Media representations of the Sámi**

Sámi representations in the mainstream Nordic media, as suggested above, have typically been negative, although this is changing. Evidence of this change and greater maturity in understating the Sámi is a 2017 Nordisk Film Production titled *Sámi Blood*.

*Sámi Blood* portrays the experiences of a 14-year-old girl (Lene Cecilia Sparrok) belonging to the Sámi peoples who is subjected to racism and eugenic scrutiny in the 1930s when she is removed from her family and sent to a state-run school that aims to re-educate her into Swedish culture. This film can be seen as a response to the negative stereotypes of Sámi and as a way of revealing the harm done to First peoples by a policy of removal and forced assimilation (which as we have seen, is a common experience of Fist Nations peoples globally and in particular in Australia and Canada).

**The Sámi First Nation - Concluding remarks**

The Sámi are the only indigenous people in Finland and the European Union. The status of the Sámi was written into the Constitution of Finland in 1995 and the Sámi have constitutional self-government in the Sámi Homeland in the spheres of language and culture since 1996. This self-government is managed by the Sámi Parliament. There are about 10,000 Sámi in Finland, more than 60 per cent of them living today outside the Sámi homeland. The total Sámi population is estimated to be over 75,000 living across four countries: Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia, with the majority living in Norway. Traditional Sámi livelihoods are reindeer herding, fishing, handicrafts, hunting and gathering. The Sámi see themselves as a distinct people with its own culture, language and traditions.

The Sámi of Scandinavia are a comparatively small and important cluster of First Nations, geographically remote and yet culturally and linguistically strong they benefit significantly from the existence of formal governance structures in the form of the Sámi Parliament, as well as specific legislative acts of the national parliament. For example in Finland the Sámi Language Act 1992, and the Law on Sámi Cultural Autonomy 1995. However the Sámi political structures are advisory and do not enjoy meaningful executive power. So while they do decide upon the nature of Sámi education for the Sámi they do not have final autonomy and thus are constrained by the respective national governments. The limitations on the Sámi

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And: The Artic University of Norway: Indigenous Studies- Master: [https://en.uit.no/education/program/270446/indigenous_studies_-_master](https://en.uit.no/education/program/270446/indigenous_studies_-_master)
parliament are most acute in matters to do with self-determination, land tenure and resource extraction and exploitation. Importantly Sámi do not enjoy a positive identity in the eyes of mainstream Scandinavians and there is very little evidence of Sámi knowledge or pedagogies extending out from these Sámi educational institutional which currently use them to the boarded student populations in their respective sovereign states. In some meaningful respects the Sámi remain as they have been historically internally displaced peoples - both literally and metaphorically.
Pedagogy and First Nations Education

Context, Continuity and Change in First Nations Societies and its relationship to effective pedagogy.

As educators know, developing curriculum is only one part of supporting students’ engagement with new learning. The central importance of instructional design and delivery, the ‘how’ of teaching, not just the ‘what’ (i.e. content) is at the heart of excellence in teaching. This is particularly the case in First Nations Studies given the contested, sensitive and interdisciplinary nature of the content, and student engagement with it and with each other. In this process teachers must make meaning for themselves and their students of the context of the study before engaging with core content. In this way building rapport and confidence with learners is dependent upon teachers encouraging intellectual engagement and deep learning based on common understandings about the unique nature of First Nations studies. In the classroom it is not sensible to talk with certitude about the commonality of experience narrative or aspirations of First Peoples across the globe, Indigenous peoples have changed with the passage of time, as has culture and community and the ways in which they connect to land, air and waterways. All First Nations, whether Inuit, Sámi, Chinook or Māori have living cultures. To look for a static unchanging representation of First Peoples is erroneous. It is not accurate to suggest that because there are no strictly ‘traditional’ First Nations communities today, that Indigenous identity, culture and community is diminished or absent. First Nations peoples in different settings and in various ways maintain their world view, their connection to country and practice their culture. First Nations culture and identity has been resilient in the face of well-known historical challenges and injustices. Accordingly First Nations teaching practice should reflect, acknowledge and pay respect to the assertion of dynamic First Nations peoples, culture and world view that has evolved and been shaped by external and internal factors over time.

Part of establishing commitment from learners, as well as ensuring topicality and relevance, is to ensure that classroom practice, discussion and activities are influenced by observations of the value and importance of First Nations peoples, culture and connection to place with which learners will initially present with varying levels of understanding and knowledge. Further, teachers should reveal the breath and extent of the lived experiences of First Nations peoples and how the development of knowledge is a practical and active form of reconciliation. In this way pedagogy is central to successful learner engagement and insight.

Student understanding of the nature of experiential learning is additionally required. Experiential learning can be broadly characterised as ‘learning by doing’ or ‘applied learning’. Experiential learning exists when a learner responds on three levels to the learning process; cognitively, affectively and behaviourally. The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes is positively correlated by learning sequences which are characterised by a high level of active learner involvement.
It has been noted that some of the problems in engaging with First Nations topics in the classroom is ignorance and assumptions. Not in relation only to content but, more significantly, in terms of pedagogy. Not only do teachers need to be knowledgeable about the subject matter that this course introduces, but importantly about the learning styles and needs of those learners in our classrooms. Teachers must, quite rightly, focus on the required learning outcomes, standards, elements and work requirements of the course. However engaging with learners, in particular Indigenous learners, must reflect, as far as practicable, First Nations ways of knowing and understanding and see classroom practice as an extension of Indigenous ways of knowing and passing on wisdom. To this end teachers must become familiar with the knowledge traditions of Indigenous peoples, and frame their classroom practice accordingly.

Factors which underpin these learning traditions for First Nations learners include:

- an acknowledgement that issues of First Nations culture are inseparable from questions of economic and political power
- that a sense and affirmation of First Nations place and identity should be infused into every aspect of teaching practice
- that resistance, persistence and adaption are the norm in First Nations social, cultural, political and economic life
- education should not take learners away from their culture and identity, but should bring learners into closer contact with it
- education is not isolated from community and community is an integral part of First Nations learners educational participation and achievement
- embracing high expectations work if teachers develop and embrace a positive sense of Identity and build partnerships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students, their families and their communities.

Student directed inquiry on culturally related topics which fosters experiential learning, out of the classroom with First Nations elders is an example of ‘best practice’ learning. As Nichol writes:

“Holistic, integrated and creative learning approaches do not compartmentalise learning according to academic disciplines or subsets of apparently unrelated skills. Areas of learning are concurrent and integrated so that the learning flows smoothly between content areas, and the interrelationship between knowledge and skills is apparent. Students prefer to observe and discuss a task or topic before working through components and activities. Culminating activities encourage creative expression and outcomes.”

First Nation community involvement in the organisation of education is highly valued.

A review of scholarly research allow us to form a clear understanding of what elements constitutes successful ways of learning in First Nations studies. These include:

• creating a sense of belonging amongst learners, is a prerequisite for engagement and learning
• traditional First Nation education is less formal, based in observation and close contact with skilled elders and participation in their activities, this should be reflected in our pedagogy
• relationships are the basis for effective learning as well as the basis for authority
• the knowledge and skills imparted to a learner is valued on the basis of the relationship between the relationship between the teacher and the learner, rather than the value of the information for its own sake.
• isolating or targeting individual learners is not appropriate, learning and assessment should be as collaborative as possible.

There is an emphasis on communal, cooperative shared and group learning. First Nations cultures often place a higher priority on the group than the individual.

Learners who are appreciated and respected, given time for group discussion, interpretation of instructions and interaction are more likely to be successful, other factors at work include:

• specificity and relevance; placing content and pedagogy in context are crucial to effective learning
• students learn better when concepts are explained in terms of their personal experience
• teachers need to ‘be themselves’
• reorganising the physical classroom environment to allow students to move around freely is encouraged
• indigenous identity and culture should be explicitly affirmed and transmitted to learners at every opportunity
• storytelling is used not only to entertain but also to teach
• the creative and performing arts are an integral mode of teaching and learning
• ceremony is an integral part of education and development
• connection to Country is an integral part of education and development
• a ‘top down’ approach to teaching, which is ignorant of students wishes and needs should be avoided
• it is in the ‘day to day’ activities that learning takes place; knowledge and lived experience are inseparable
• ‘busy work’ such as the completion of worksheets, or similar, is not valued
• First Nation students, responding to research questionnaires and interviews, most commonly define a good teacher as, ‘Someone who likes us and is fair.’

Integrating traditional knowledge with more formal education and student development is important, as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy states:

“Of particular importance to the engagement of Indigenous students is…inclusive teaching practice…pedagogy that helps to make learning more meaningful and important to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students ‘prior
knowledge and identities, with contexts outside the classroom and with multiple ways of knowing and cultural perspectives.”

Finally, teachers must keep in mind that the teaching of a First Nations course must not only affirm for First Nation peoples, the connection to place, their culture and both their future and their past, but further, it must be taught in a sensitive and empathetic manner so as to involve the education of all learners, irrespective of their background, about a critical part of who we are as a whole community with a shared history.

**Four Pedagogies**\(^{128}\) **Applicable to First Nations and First Nations Studies**

**Pedagogy 1: Inquiry Based Learning**\(^{129}\)

- Guiding questions or ‘big ideas’ lie at the heart of an inquiry based model of teaching and learning. The aim of the inquiry model is to take students beyond the simple mastery of facts to being able to use a set of thinking skills to pose questions, gather evidence, analyse, reflect and communicate ideas thereby deepening their understanding of concepts and guiding questions. This is entirely consistent with Indigenous episteme as well as with the construction and rationale of First Nations Studies.
- Inquiry Based learning is a particularity valid form of student engagement for First Nations Studies. This is because the nature of the course invites the critical construction of salient interdisciplinary issues questions which might take account of historical, anthropological sociological and political aspects, which may not be readily accessible or intelligible to students unless an inquiry is undertaken. Further the course, taught well, invites a high level of student engagement in forming questions as well as framing and articulating structured but highly differentiated responses.
- It’s important to remember that inquiry-based learning is not a technique or practice, but a process that has the potential to increase the intellectual engagement and deep understanding of learners, urging them to:
  - Develop their questioning, research and communication skills
  - Collaborate outside the classroom
  - Solve problems, create solutions, and tackle real-life questions and issues
  - Participate in the creation and amelioration of ideas and knowledge

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\(^{127}\) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy 2005-2008.

\(^{128}\) By use of the term pedagogy we use the definition provide by the Australian Department of Education: mean: the function or work of teaching; the art or science of teaching, education instruction methods. Put simply curriculum is the WHAT of teaching and pedagogy is the HOW. For more information see: Child Australia – What is Pedagogy: How does it influence our practice? : [https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CA-Statement-Pedagogy.pdf](https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CA-Statement-Pedagogy.pdf)

\(^{129}\) There are a wide range of resources available online, two useful videos supporting understating of Inquiry Based Learning are : What is Inquiry-Based Learning: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u84ZsS6niPc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u84ZsS6niPc) and Inquiry-Based Learning: Developing Student-Driven Questions: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdYev6MXTQA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdYev6MXTQA)
The 5 steps of inquiry-based learning

1. Ask questions
2. Probe into various situations
3. Conduct analyses and provide descriptions
4. Communicate findings, verbally or in writing
5. Think about the information and knowledge obtained

The principles of inquiry-based learning

- There are certain principles that govern inquiry-based learning and can be summarised as follows:
  1. **Principle 1**
     Learners are in the centre of the entire process, while teachers, resources and technology are adequately organised to support them.
  2. **Principle 2**
     All learning activities revolve around information-processing skills.
  3. **Principle 3**
     Teachers facilitate the learning process, but also seek to learn more about their students and the process of inquiry-based learning.
  4. **Principle 4**
     Emphasis should be placed on evaluating the development of information-processing skills and conceptual understanding, and not on the actual content of the field.

The 4 forms of inquiry

There are four forms of inquiry that are commonly used in inquiry-based pedagogy:

1. **Confirmation inquiry**
   Learners are given a question, as well as a method, to which the end result is already known. The goal is to confirm the results. This enables learners to reinforce already established ideas, and to practice their investigative skills.

2. **Structured inquiry**
   Learners are given the question and the method of achieving the result, but the goal is to provide an explanation that is already supported by the evidence gathered during and through the investigative process.

3. **Guided inquiry**
   Learners are only given a question. The main goal is to design the method of investigation and then test the question itself. This type of inquiry is not typically as structured as the previously mentioned forms.

4. **Open inquiry**
   Learners must form their own questions, design investigative methods, and then
carry out the inquiry itself. They must present their results at the end of the process.

In an instructional setting, inquiry-based learning can give teachers the opportunity to allow students to fully explore problems and scenarios, so that they can learn from not only the results, but also the process itself. They are encouraged to ask questions, explore their environments, and obtain evidence that support claims and results, and design a convincing argument regarding the way they reached to the end result. Inquiry around the basis of First Nations Identity, contact with settler states or contemporary cultural expression are particularly suited to an inquiry approach to the teaching and learning process. Further in the context of the study of First Nations, the open inquiry model is best suited especially in dealing with issues which are difficult to quantify, summarise or draw simple one-dimensional conclusions from.

**Illustrative Example: (Guided) Inquiry Questions.**

What explains successful Treaty making in Canada, New Zealand and the United States but not Australia?

Critically examine what has been done and remains to be done in order to achieve a treaty between First and Second Nations in Australia?

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**Pedagogy 2: Understanding by Design (UbD) / Backwards Design**

The Understanding by Design framework is a way of thinking purposefully about curricular planning and is particularly useful in an Indigenous context. It follows a three stage process: the identification of learning outcomes, the identification of evidence required to determine level of student understanding and skill development, and the design of learning and assessment opportunities to facilitate student learning and success in meeting desired outcomes.

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130 The Tasmanian Government Teaching for Understanding framework is a useful resource for inquiry based learning [http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/teaching-for-understanding](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/teaching-for-understanding)


132 Applicable video resources in Backward Design are: Educational Innovation at UW-Madison: The "Backward Design" Framework: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cveylXCPUmw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cveylXCPUmw) and for Understanding by Design, The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units - Jay McTighe: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XShVw_aFeTQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XShVw_aFeTQ)  A very good introductory video is: The power of student-driven learning: Shelley Wright at TEDxWestVancouverED: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fMC-z7K0r4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fMC-z7K0r4)
Given the high level thinking and the interdisciplinary nature of much of Indigenous learning, and the way that this is reflected in the course standards and assessment criteria it is strongly recommended that a backward design methodology be employed in First Nations Studies. Such an approach has a number of benefits. Firstly it provides teachers with a cleared understanding of what their learners should focus on in the delivery of the course and how best to assess their performance consistent with the standards. Secondly it allows learners to have a clearer set of pedagogical and planning ‘guideposts’ to inform their thinking and to provide context to their assessment pieces. For these reasons it is recommended in the contest of First Nations pedagogy.

**Backward design** also called *backward planning* or *backward mapping*, is a process that educators use to design learning experiences and instructional techniques to achieve specific learning goals. Backward design begins with the objectives of a unit or course—what students are expected to learn and be able to do—and then proceeds “backward” to create lessons that achieve those desired goals.

The basic rationale motivating backward design is that starting with the end goal, rather than starting with the first lesson chronologically delivered during a unit or course, helps teachers design a sequence of lessons, problems, projects, presentations, assignments, and assessments that result in students achieving the academic goals of a course or unit—that is, actually learning what they were expected to learn.

Backward design helps teachers create courses and units that are focused on the goal (learning) rather than the process (teaching). Because “beginning with the end” is often a counterintuitive process, backward design gives teachers a structure they can follow when creating a curriculum and planning their instructional process. While approaches may vary widely from school to school or teacher to teacher, a basic backward-design process might take the following form:

1. A teacher begins by reviewing the learning outcomes that students are expected to meet by the end of a course or grade level.
2. The teacher creates a list of the essential knowledge, skills, and concepts that students need to learn during a specific unit. In some cases, these academic expectations will be called learning objectives, among other terms.
3. The teacher then designs a final assessment, or demonstration of learning that students will complete to show that they have learned what they were expected to learn. The final assessment will measure whether and to what degree students have achieved the unit goals.
4. The teacher then creates a series of lessons, projects, and supporting instructional strategies intended to progressively move student understanding and skill acquisition closer to the desired goals of the unit.
5. The teacher then determines the formative-assessment strategies that will be used to check for understanding and progress over the duration of the unit (the term *formative assessment* refers to a wide variety of methods—from questioning techniques to
quizzes—that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course, often for the purposes of modifying lessons and teaching techniques to make them more effective). Advocates typically argue that formative assessment is integral to effective backward design because teachers need to know what students are or are not learning if they are going to help them achieve the goals of a unit.

6. The teacher may then review and reflect on the prospective unit plan to determine if the design is likely to achieve the desired learning goals.133

Illustrative Example: Backwards Design.

**Learning Goal:** Students demonstrate an understanding of contemporary expression of First Nations culture.

**Instructional Design:** Students co-develop a rubric which provides clear guidance on what they are required to do and understand using the course standards. This is mediated and agreed with the teacher. Timelines and the nature of the presentation are co-constructed and agreed to between teacher and students.

Following an introduction by the teacher of the general nature of contemporary First Nations cultural expression, learners, working in pairs, undertake their own research and develop their understanding of contemporary cultural expression and shape their presentation to best exhibit and demonstrate their understanding, consistent with the requirements established by the task rubric.

**Assessment:** Students present their findings, teacher grades against the rubric, including level of student engagement, organisational and team skills and project management skills. In addition to the teacher grades, students are given an opportunity for self-assessment and reflection as part of the formative process of ‘feeding-forward’ into the next task.

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133 See: https://www.edglossary.org/backward-design/
Further information relating to Understanding by Design can be found at http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx or https://www.jaymctighe.com/

A highly useful additional chapter reading on Backward Design can be found at: http://www.asbmb.org/uploadedFiles/Backward%20design.pdf

The Department of Education’s Good Teaching: Quality Assessment Practices, Guiding Learning guide also provides useful information that links curriculum design and assessment, using a backwards design. The guide can be found at: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/students/school-and-colleges/curriculum/good-teaching-guides/
Pedagogy 3: Transformative Teaching\textsuperscript{134}

Transformative pedagogy involves engaged learning. It is fundamentally democratic learning. A relevant education is not limited to a classroom, but seeks to contextualise the issues by the surrounding areas and people as parts of the learning environment. A problem-posing approach to education involves listening, dialogue, action and reflection. Transformative education demands active and engaged students, asking critical questions, and search for additional information at other sources as well as those given in a curriculum. This is exactly what we want to see amongst students engaged in critical inquiry about First Nations, particularly in an historical context. The students are trained in information literacy: searching and critically assessing the information obtained. The assessed information should then be placed in a context and used for example to solve a problem.

The students must collaborate and negotiate meaning with peers and in intergroup relations. This is usually an efficient way to avoid superficial learning and to develop deeper understanding. In transformative education, an important concept is the “Communities of practice” and “Knowledge building communities”. With the consolidation of information communication technologies (ICT) and online education, there is a considerable potential for increase and a transformation from a simple classroom to complex virtual classrooms with participants collaborating irrespective of time and place.\textsuperscript{135}

The value of transformative teaching is summed up in the following student comments:

\begin{quote}
“I learn best when the teacher is hands on and doesn’t just talk at me. They need to be interested in what they're teaching and encourage class discussions. Not only does this encourage us to use what we learned, it also helps us see the information in a different way.”\textsuperscript{136}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{134} See Bring on the learning revolution! Sir Ken Robinson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LeIXa3U_j&list=PLDIEYA9TS0r_nNsTe50Pjnex4t-q2bqmp and Transformative Teaching: David Scott: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTAI8naW1qo

\textsuperscript{135} Modified from source: https://ufbutv.com/e-learning/transformative-pedagogy/


\textsuperscript{136} See: Todd Finley - 4 Things Transformational Teachers Do: https://www.edutopia.org/blog/big-things-transformational-teachers-do-todd-finley
Pedagogy 4: Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning.

A key pedagogy which cements the Indigenous at the heart of teaching and learning is the Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning. The eight-way framework of Aboriginal pedagogy brings indigenous ways of knowing and being ‘out of the dusty corners of anthropology and linguistics’ and into the Australian classroom. It comprises eight interconnected pedagogies that see teaching and learning as fundamentally holistic, non-linear, visual, kinaesthetic, social and contextualised. Teaching through Aboriginal processes and protocols, not just Aboriginal content validates and teaches through Aboriginal culture and may enhance the learning for all students. The key elements of this approach include the following elements:

- Learning through narrative.
- Planning and visualising explicit processes.
- Working non-verbally with self-reflective, hands-on methods.
- Learning through images, symbols and metaphors.
- Learning through place-responsive, environmental practice.
- Using indirect, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches.
- Modelling and scaffolding by working from wholes to parts.
- Connecting learning to local values, needs and knowledge.

Illustrative Example: Transformative Teaching.

Teacher poses the (big) question ‘What is Justice?’

Teacher and students discuss and collaborate to develop as many understandings as to the nature of justice as they can. They start to draw out distinctions and similarities between First and Second nations concepts and practice of Justice.

Students working in small groups, find evidence of the application of justice in different settings, in particular in the context of contact between First and Second Nations, using examples taken from the criminal justice system and disputes over land and natural resource management, historically and in the contemporary period, as primers.

Students, using a variety of media, demonstrate their understanding of the implications of differing forms and expressions of justice between First and Second Nations in the context of achieving reconciliation in Australia.

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This approach can be represented as such in this infographic.\textsuperscript{139}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{aboriginal_ways.png}
\caption{Illustrative Example: Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Illustrative Example: Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning.}

\textit{Students are given the task of researching a key Indigenous activist from the nineteenth century from within their regional community.}

\textit{Having undertaken initial research, students collaboratively arrange for a visit to the place(s) where the leader came from and where the activist’s major life experiences took place. The teacher works with relevant Indigenous community members to have a First Nations elder share knowledge and context about the life and times and significance of the person understudy. Students additionally research both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous artistic representations and cultural artefacts associated with the individual to create a holistic understanding of their links to community, motivations and achievements.}

\textit{Students prior to and post site visit participate in guided yarning circles to deconstruct and reconstruct meaning, perspective and narrative to do with the selected historical figure. Students make entries in their course Reflective Journals in response to the stimuli and discussions.}

\textit{Students, working in small groups of three or four, prepare a multimodal response including student-created artistic and non-verbal expression with references to place, cultural expression non-verbal symbols and historical experience to explain the leader’s story and present this back to members of the relevant First Nations Community on Country.}

\textsuperscript{139} A valuable video resource on the eight Aboriginal ways of teaching is available at the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) website: https://www.aitsl.edu.au/tools-resources/resource/eight-ways-of-learning-illustration-of-practice
An integrated Typology of the Four Pillars of First Nations Curriculum and Pedagogy

Indigenous ways of knowing
Through, with, by and from:
Place, Family, Elders, Language, Culture, Ceremony, Cosmology and Beliefs

Holistic learning

Curriculum Reform

Collaborative practices and partnerships with family, community and elders

Culturally responsive pedagogy

School and Teacher Capacity building

Intellectual

Indigenize, decolonise and democratise teaching and assessment
Cooperative and experiential learning
Land based education
Application of Indigenous epistemology
Inquiry based Learning
Transformative teaching
Interdisciplinary studies
Promote excellence, equity, and holistic student wellbeing

Emotional

Commitment to students and student learning
Ongoing professional learning
Professional knowledge
Professional practice
Indigenous educators in schools
Interdisciplinary practice
Teacher resources
Leadership in Indigenous learning

Physical

Inclusion of Indigenous communities
Collaboration and partnership with Indigenous communities
Integration of Indigenous practices and protocols within classrooms
Respect for wisdom and role of Elders and community members
Non-linear relationships

Spiritual

Honouring Indigenous knowledge’s and ways of knowing
Co-constructed and respecting Indigenous visions and goals of learning
Reflecting Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions
Critical, comparative and non-linear
Socially transformative and an act of reconciliation

Collaborative practices and partnerships with family, community and elders

Non-linear relationships
Elaborations of the Four Pillars Typology

Pillar 1 - Curriculum Reform

Best practice curriculum writing is characterised by co-development and co-construction with First Nations peoples.

Curriculum should explicitly provide for inquiry based learning as a tool of culturally appropriate learning.

Experiential learning should be provided for in curriculum design, as should place-based learning sequences, both of which reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

First Nations cultural knowledge, protocols and practices, as well as First Nations medicinal, social, economic and cultural contributions should be incorporated into curriculum.

Curriculum should explore the characteristics of distinct First Nations Identity, incorporating integrated concepts of culture, language, place and episteme.

Engaging with content such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, the primacy of environmental balance and respect for the earth’s integrated ecosystems should be a priority, as they reflect and emphasise Indigenous epistemology and ontology.

Curriculum should explore from multiple perspectives First Nation’s level of political and participation with settler nations over time.

Curriculum should provide multiple opportunities for learner understanding of the defining moments and events in First Nations engagement with newcomers.

It should critically reflect on the role of key Indigenous individuals and communities, and their impact in the historical and contemporary narrative.

Curriculum should critically reflect on the role and implication of settler governance intervention and influence on First Nations both within the historical and contemporary context.

Curriculum should engage with a critical analysis of current perceptions and realities for First Nations peoples, including the non-linear process of First Nation decolonisation.

In curriculum around the history of First Nations relationships with second nations, the gradual realisation of First Nations rights and levels of self-determination should not be seen as a zero-sum process. The curriculum must stress that the implementation of indigenous rights provide for more substantial rights and more just relationships not only for and between indigenous peoples but also for second nations peoples too.

Curriculum should connect learners with local Indigenous celebrations, knowledge’s and traditions.
Curriculum should be designed so as to ensure that directed and meaningful opportunities for **Learners to engage with all six senses** (sight, smell, touch, hear, and spiritually based intuition) as well as the domains of multiple intelligence (logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential and ethical) in differing curriculum design and instruction.

Curriculum should be constructed so as to be **socially transformative** and as a **mechanism of practical and active reconciliation**.

The agency and active participation of First Nations and the peoples should permeate the curriculum: First Nations peoples as change-makers not as passive respondents to change.

**Pillar 2- School and Teacher Capacity Building**

In order to give emphasis and build capacity in teachers, **planned, systematic and ongoing professional learning in First Nations curriculum development and pedagogy must be provided.**

The professional learning should be **co-constructed** with First Nations peoples.

It should include not only key knowledge, but more critically, focus on **culturally responsive pedagogy** as well as **First Nations ontology and epistemology**.

School leadership **must create opportunities and support teachers** in participating in relevant professional learning.

School leaders, including Heads of Departments should create opportunities for **school-based interdisciplinary studies**, particularly across disciplines in high school settings, which **provide a clear and explicit focus on First Nation’s histories, identities and cultures**.

Professional Development should be aligned with the **AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers, as well as the standards for principals**, in particular professional knowledge, practice and engagement.\(^{140}\)

Initial teacher training should include a mandatory unit on First Nations Curriculum and pedagogy.

Australian professional standards for teachers and principals should be strengthened to make First Nations knowledge and practice a stronger priority.

Schools should support educators by ensuring **ready access to underpinning resources.**

School leaders should encourage **collaborative interaction and relationship building with First Nations peoples**, including elders within their local community, this includes the

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\(^{140}\) AITSL: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership: [https://www.aitsl.edu.au/](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/)
presence and voice of First Nations community members and elders in schools, staffrooms and classrooms.

In a similar manner to the way Curriculum design is configured to provide for meaningful opportunity for success for students, so to should professional support and learning for teachers provide for successful and confident classroom knowledge and professional practice.

Within specific regional settings, individual schools may take a leadership role in the facilitation of Frist Nation’s education.

**Pillar 3- Collaborative practices and partnerships with family, community and elders**

Communication with parents/guardians should be explicit, foster an open and continuous relationship and partnership with parents/guardians related to the learner’s development (include open days, formative assessment, joint-field trips and showcasing classroom events.)

Teachers should actively seek to better understand learner’s family life, identity and forms of solidarity and community so as to better anticipate learner attitudes and behaviours.

Teachers should foster a collaborative community of learning with learners, their families and communities as appropriate.

Teachers creatively integrate First Nations people’s world views, concerns and current priorities in to the teaching and learning process.

Teachers should actively seek out resources and relevant members of the community to support curriculum initiatives in First Nation Studies and student learning.

Ensure that regional differences (where they exist) in First Nations relationships, connection to country and to each other, are noted and accounted for in the teaching and learning process.

**Recognition of regional language and cultural differences** as a result of close consultation with family, community and elders.

Teachers should work with communities to keep themselves appropriately aware of the political and cultural structures in which those communities live and operate as well as gaining a recognition of the key social, political economic and cultural priorities of those communities.

Teachers of First Nations studies should additionally make themselves aware of gender roles within relevant communities as well as social and cultural norms and mores within their community.
Teachers and school leaders should become familiar with First Nations systems of law and codes of conduct and take account of these factors in their dealings with students in the classroom.

Teachers should show respect for pre-existing structures and power relationships within Indigenous communities and work in a collaborative, non-hierarchical manner.

Collaboration with First Nations communities means respecting difference, understanding that building trust is a long term project based on mutual confidence, competence and respect.

**Pillar 4 - Culturally responsive pedagogy**

The student should be at the centre of classroom practice. This means that teachers should make themselves aware of the spheres of influence in the student’s life, and reflect (First Nations) community standards and expectations in the classroom and ensure that the worldview expressed in the classroom is not inconsistent with an Indigenous world view. (e.g., environmental respect, humility, belonging, honesty a focus on shared learning and teamwork).

Teachers should model key First Nations values in their classrooms, for example Respect, Responsibility, Relevance and Reciprocity (the Four ‘R’s of Canadian First Nations education).

Belonging is a key aspect of First Nations episteme, teachers must ensure that their teaching style encourages this amongst all students.

Reflecting the importance of meeting the needs of classroom diversity, as well as reflecting Indigenous history and culture, classrooms should closely reflect the commonly expressed Indigenous value of ‘giving everyone a voice’. Acceptance of diverse thinking and giving sufficient time to reach consensus amongst students as a way of learning, and from that point moving forward from one learning sequence to the next, must be a priority in an indigenised classroom.

Educators should acknowledge and model the spheres of influence which impacts on First Nations participation and engagement with learning. This means the influence of family, local community and First Nations elders.

Classrooms should be indigenised – this means that traditional classroom hierarchical structures should be minimised, and based on meaningful respect of elders, decision making should be collaborative, and task design and assessment should be discussed and agreed upon with students. When decisions and structures cannot be practicably democratised negotiation should take place and an explanation of indigenous respect for elders as a legitimate organising and decision-making structure.
The formation and maintenance of reciprocal and respectful relationships where there is an explicit focus on trustworthiness, belonging, success and integrity in student to student and student to teacher relationships.

The utilisation of Yarning Circles to reach consensual decisions.

Implementing culturally responsive student research and inquiry process where questions should originate from members of the respective indigenous community and the results reported back to the community.

Acknowledgment of and use of songlines as a way of understanding First Nations history, geography, ancestry and spirituality as well as respecting First Nations episteme.

Privileging indigenous voices, experiences, knowledge reflections, ways of thinking and forms of analysis in day to day classroom practice.

Explicitly discussing and reaching collective views on the power relations implicit in non-Indigenous educational frameworks and attempting to decolonise them by discursive and democratic inquiry methodologies, in a way that is liberating of pre-existing power structures between the privileged (white) voice and the comparatively powerless Indigenous voice in the classroom.

Ensuring that Indigenous world view and cosmology are shared in classroom practice, this means a vision of human life being fundamentally interconnected with the natural world and from this interconnection, culture, cultural practice and spiritually is grounded. Accordingly in indigenised classroom practice, science and land management, spirituality and human relationships land social control and human unity and solidarity, for example, can and should be given equal weight and discussed and examined concurrently, as far as possible, to accurately reflect holistic Indigenous epistemology and ontology.

The application of inquiry based learning shows respect to First Nations learning and task attainment practices. Opportunities for practical, experiential learning closely mirrors traditional learning within indigenous communities and likewise should be adopted.

Traditional Indigenous ways of education is of gradual empowerment and the development of resiliency, so young people become responsible for themselves and their communities as adults. Classroom practice should reflect this.

While First Nations cultures vary widely, there is a broad tendency towards long-term thinking and that decisions should be made with the interests of multiple generations in mind. Accordingly classroom practice should encourage thinking and decision making which takes account of long term impacts. This can be applied in a wide range of disciplines such as Science, Geography, the Humanities and Health and Physical Education. This invites discursive, inquiry based classroom practices, the importance of collective decision making and including voices including family and community members in forming conclusions. As a result educators have a responsibility in their pedagogy to create sufficient time and space for deep, reflective thinking to occur amongst students, particularly as such thinking to
be indigenised requires thinking about how decisions affects other parts of an interconnected world, necessitating the development amongst students of holistic and long-term perspectives.

Leading from the previous comment, Assessment and reporting should be rich, gather multiple forms of evidences in a variety of written, performance, artistic and other relevant forms. It must be fair to be sustainable and intelligible to community members, frequently collaborative, ongoing, relevant, culturally appropriate and reporting mechanism should reflect the diversity of students. ‘High stakes’ summative assessment should be avoided as it is inconsistent with First Nations learning practice and episteme.
Conclusion

This report opened with the writing of Mark McKenna, Professor of History at Sydney University. His comments in suggesting that Australia is caught between a history of guilt, division and ill-ease, on one hand, and our present inability to undertake and participate in a more complete and honest reckoning with our past in order to allow the national consciousness to move forward, should resonate in our national discourse, and provided impetus for my work.

It was additionally observed that over the last decade there has been an emergent realisation of the central role of education and educators in improving Australia’s ability to achieve meaningful reconciliation between Australia’s First and Second Nations. This realisation is, in part, resultant from the abject failure of politicians, particularly at the national level, to hear the calls for a way out of our collective moral distress and to plot a path away from the powerlessness and torment of both black and white Australians when it comes to the imagining and construction of a shared, preferred future.

This report has carefully examined the ideas, structures and governance arrangements, as well as the underpinning educational and political cultural settings which provide for meaningful engagement with First Nations curriculum and pedagogy in four sovereign states. Whether it be the adoption of biculturalism in New Zealand, its adoption of a comprehensive and culturally responsive Māori-mediated curriculum, or the highly detailed structures and initiative taken in Canadian provinces such as Ontario and British Colombia, this report has demonstrated that much of the world has moved past the reactionary outrage surrounding First Nations rights and voice which still seems to permeate the debate in Australia. This report has made a number of specific recommendations for change based on observations, conversations and research. It is hoped that as a result of the wide dissemination of this report that they are, in part or full, adopted in Australian jurisdictions.

It is reasonable to ask the question: ‘How can education overcome a contested past and create a more secure common future for all Australians?’ This report has clearly shown that there has emerged in other places the ideas and structures, the sense of purpose and appropriate resource allocation to allow education to undertake the kinds of reforms and rapprochement between First and Second Nations which seems so elusive in Australia at the moment. As this report suggests, we should learn and benefit from their experiences.

Australian First Nations form an integral, vital, honourable and essential part of our national fabric, they are not a footnote on colonial history. Education is best placed to affirm the dignity, agency and power of First Nations as equal partners with all others.
“Voice is power, Voice is recognition. Voice is empowerment.”

Noel Pearson
Lowitja O’Donoghue Oration 2018.
Appendix ‘A’ - Key Contemporary Issues facing First Nations Internationally

Current Issues: The Challenges facing First Nations and their Peoples

Questions of self-determination
- Sovereignty
- Political representation
- Treaty
- Constitutional recognition

Justice
- Crime
- Rates of incarceration
- Treatment while incarcerated

Control over natural resources
- Land tenure
- Native title

Pollution

Health provision and outcomes

Education
- Indigenous programs
- Control and partnerships
- Participation and achievement
- Epistemology and ontology

Language and Culture
- Identity loss
- Cultural appropriation
- Hybridity
- Intergenerational transfer

Health
- Nutrition
- Preventable diseases
- Addictions
- Mental Health
- Sexual Health
- Self-harm

Employment, unemployment and underemployment

Housing and infrastructure
Appendix ‘B’ - Key Digital Resources

New Zealand\textsuperscript{141}

Ministry of Education

http://www.education.govt.nz/

Ministry of Māori Development

https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en

New Zealand curriculum

http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/

Kaupapa Māori and Rangahau

www.rangahau.co.nz

Kaupapa Māori Theory


Canada

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada


British Colombia Curriculum

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