

School Practices and Education Policy: Aboriginal Students' Challenges and Successes

Lorenzo Cherubini, Ed.D.

Professor, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario (Canada)
Lorenzo.Cherubini@brocku.ca

ABSTRACT: The academic success of Aboriginal students remains particularly concerning across Ontario, Canada, the United States and abroad. Less than half of all Aboriginal students in Canada receive a secondary school diploma since they often do not discern meaning in both the provincial curriculum and the priorities of public schools. In the province of Ontario (Canada), the Ministry of Education (OME) 2007 policy document, *The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (the Framework) addresses the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in public education. The Framework points to the epistemological learning preferences of Aboriginal students and aims to make all stakeholders more accountable for the academic success of Aboriginal students. This study examines the perceptions and experiences of Aboriginal students in northern Ontario publicly-funded schools in the context of the objectives of the OME policy Framework. The findings of this longitudinal qualitative study include two categories that are described as 'Schools as Spaces of Socialization' and 'Principled Actions and Variability.' The categories, as the discussion of the paper will suggest, bring to light the potential of Aboriginal students to first flourish in the imagination of their individual and collective identity, and second, to undertake the challenges associated to public schooling and thrive in what can be adverse environments. However, the findings of this study also point to the fact that some Aboriginal students perceive the various injustices of school practices and relations but in most instances, consider themselves as having very limited opportunities to enact change.

KEYWORDS: Aboriginal students, education policy, achievement gap

1. Introduction

The academic success of Aboriginal students remains concerning across Canada and the United States (Pirbhai-Illich 2011). Less than half of all Aboriginal students in Canada receive a secondary school diploma (Cherubini 2012). For Aboriginal students, including First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples, there are often prevailing cultural differences between home and public school communities (Kanu 2011). Moreover, some public school educators do not hold high expectations of academic success for Aboriginal students nor do they provide a broad range of programs to complement Aboriginal students' learning (Battiste et.al 2002; Bell 2004). According to Paquette and Fallon (2010), the sociocultural and educational paradigms of teaching and learning in publicly-funded schools have contributed to the epistemological tension experienced by Aboriginal students that too often results in disjointed educational experiences.

In Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) 2007 policy document, *The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (the Framework) sought to address some of the achievement gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in public education. The Framework brings to light some of the epistemological and cultural learning preferences of Aboriginal students and aims to make the OME, public school board administrators, principals and teachers more accountable for the academic success of Aboriginal students and their communities. The Framework proposes that all stakeholders, including Aboriginal communities, work together to improve the educational experiences of Aboriginal students in Ontario publicly-funded schools.

In this vein this study examines the perceptions and experiences of Aboriginal students in northern Ontario publicly-funded schools (that have significant enrolments of Aboriginal students) in the context of the objectives of the 2007 OME policy Framework seven years into its implementation. It is a qualitative study that honours the voices of the Aboriginal students and intentionally neglects the more quantitative-based data of standardized test scores (from the Education Quality and Assessment Office) since the tests themselves might be considered culturally misrepresentative instruments to measure Aboriginal student learning (Cherubini 2014). This analysis is the second phase of a comprehensive study.

The findings of the study include two core categories that are described as 'Schools as Spaces of Socialization' and 'Principled Actions and Variability.' The categories point to the potential of Aboriginal students to first flourish in the imagination of their individual and collective identity, and second, to undertake the challenges associated with public schooling and thrive in what can be adverse environments.

2. The policy context

The *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* recognizes the significance of holistic learning preferences for Aboriginal students, as it does the lack of awareness of some teachers, school and school board administrators about the learning styles and worldviews of Aboriginal students (2007, 5-6). The OME declares that the policy Framework represents a substantiated effort “to ensure that Aboriginal students succeed at a rate comparable to that of other students in the education system... [and] to improve outcomes for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners” (2007, 6). The policy mandate would seem particularly relevant given that “non-Aboriginals educated in ... Canada have already learned about Indigenous people from the lens of Western epistemology – an outsider perspective that is different from multiple Aboriginal and Indigenous perspectives” (Chartrand 2012, 145; Richards 2008).

The principles of the Framework complement the goal of the policy Framework to “improve Aboriginal student-achievement and engagement” (2007, 9). The OME policy also provides specific performance measures including improvement in Aboriginal students’ self-esteem and the increased involvement of Aboriginal parents in their children’s school community. The policy is an attempt to improve Aboriginal student achievement and engagement sector-wide while enhancing the knowledge-base of all students and educators about Aboriginal socio-historical and socio-cultural realities. The OME Framework serves as the measuring stick for this investigation since its performance outcomes were the basis for the semi-structured questions that informed the research conversations among the Aboriginal students.

3. Literature review

The various perspectives of teaching practices and paradigms of learning as they are discussed in the literature serve as the framework for this investigative study.

3.1. Teaching practices

Eurocentric-based teaching practices have prevailed in public school classrooms across Canada for decades (Battiste 2002). Some have detected and identified an anti-Aboriginal bias in classroom materials and pedagogical practices employed by mainstream teachers (Schissel & Wotherspoon 2003). Such bias contributes significantly to an increased sense of marginalization experienced by Aboriginal students and eventually to their disengagement in provincially standardized public

school curriculum and classroom practices (Kanu 2002). Feeling marginalized by Eurocentric teaching practices that do not represent their epistemologies contributes to Aboriginal students' boredom in school (Partington et al. 1999, Wotherspoon 1998). Empirical evidence attests to the positive results in academic achievement for Aboriginal students when there is meaningful incorporation of Aboriginal epistemologies and perspectives into teaching practices (SAEE Report 2009).

The key to improving teaching practices, according to the literature, rests with quality and responsive educators. For Moyle (2004) quality educators embody sophisticated levels of professional awareness that supports their capacities to tailor their practices in direct response to the needs of their students. The literature suggests that in order for public education to exist in the postcolonial present then colonial teaching practices, where and when they exist, need to be further examined in lieu of the hegemonic power they extol (Cherubini, 2010; Ryan 2006).

3.2. Paradigms of learning

The literature related to the learning preferences and the academic achievement of Aboriginal learners is indeed emerging (Cherubini 2015). This is not to suggest that Aboriginal learners are epistemically homogenous. There are various paradigms of learning discussed in the research that claim to resonate with Aboriginal learners. Kanu (2011) discusses various approaches that include learning through stories, observing and scaffolding. These suggest that there is no one absolute view of learning and that the aforementioned learning preferences are essentially variations of other epistemic preferences. Aboriginal epistemologies account for the respective cultures and languages of First Nations' peoples as learning is considered to be a holistic and spiritual process (Kawagley et al. 1998). Aboriginal knowledges are based on a series of interconnected relationships from the ecological and linguistic, to localized and shared knowledge (Battiste 2002).

According to the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), learning and learner environments need to substantiate the "developmental conditions for children [and] the reconstruction of their cultural identity, revitalization of intergenerational transmission of culture and traditional language, and [the] reproduction of culturally distinctive values and practices in programs" (Chpt. 1, 5.4.1). Learning from mainstream curriculum that is written and taught predominantly by those of Eurocentric descent generally does not do justice to Aboriginal learning paradigms and is by consequence more reflective of a homogenizing and monocultural approach to learning (Ball 2004).

Agbo (2004) and Young et al., (2010) concluded that the process of accounting for the learning styles of Aboriginal students and meaningfully enacting these differences in practice has led to improved academic achievement and school retention. Schools are better served when they engage the learning styles of Aboriginal students in learning environments founded upon interdependence and respect (Paquette & Falloon 2010). This sense of engagement is instrumental towards addressing the cultural disjoint between Eurocentric schooling and Aboriginal knowledges, including the dissonance that exists in some contemporary classrooms between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learning styles (Marule 2012).

4. Methodology

This study is the second phase of a longitudinal project involving the same Aboriginal student participants from three different public elementary schools in northern Ontario that had a proportionately high enrolment of Aboriginal students. The participating schools operate under the jurisdiction of different boards. In advance of the site selection, a senior administrator from each school board identified certain kindergarten to grade eight schools that were considered high and low functioning based on the culturally relevant programming offered to Aboriginal students and their communities.

4.1. The students

Eight male and nine female students participated in the research conversations. Northern Ontario encompasses an expansive geography hence the student participants represented different communities that included Missanabie Cree, Michipicoten, Ojibway, and Anishnabai groups. During the second phase of the longitudinal study the students were in grade eight. The three public elementary schools selected as research sites are under the jurisdiction of school boards that cover in excess of 15,000 square kilometres, including 15 Aboriginal groups.

4.2. The research conversations

The second phase of the study involved a research conversation at each of the three elementary schools. The conversations occurred near the conclusion of the school year (May and June) and were between 90 and 120 minutes in length. The informal research conversations resonate with Kanu's (2011) approach to better understanding participants' perceptions; in this way, the first set of research conversations one year

earlier sought students' initial responses to questions relating to culturally appropriate curriculum materials, classroom practices, and the social context of their schooling experiences. The second research conversations accounted for the findings from the first phase of the study and generated the probing questions that invited students to elaborate on their perceptions. The questions, thus, were based on the extent to which the mandate of the OME policy Framework was "improve[ing] the outcomes for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners" (2007, 6), improving Aboriginal student engagement and esteem, meaningfully involving parents and the Aboriginal community in educational opportunities, and heightening educational awareness about Aboriginal socio-historical and socio-cultural realities (2007, 21-22).

The conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed, and shared with each student for member check. Various key excerpts from the students are included in the paper. All participants are identified by pseudonyms.

4.3. Data analysis

Both phases of this research project employed a grounded theory design. This qualitative approach conceptualizes analysis that is grounded in the words of the participants themselves (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Each transcript is coded on a line-by-line basis and distinguishes key words and phrases (Charmaz 2006). The key words are coded and subsumed into concepts to formulate preliminary themes and then core categories (Cherubini 2007). An elder who was not involved in the research project triangulated the findings (see Card 2016).

5. Findings and discussion

Two categories were grounded in participants' voices, including 'Schools as Spaces of Socialization' and 'Principled Actions and Variability'.

5.1. Schools as spaces of socialization

The students in the high functioning schools anticipated attending secondary school. Students like Scott felt that their teachers considered them "bright students." These students are empowered by the high expectations their teachers have for them. In these learning environments students took responsibility for their education because they felt as if their teachers expected them to succeed. Brad's observation of his teacher's perceptions is reminiscent of the others from high functioning schools: "They see me as

a person who sets goals and achieves them.” Such student perceptions are indicative of adolescents who are made to feel as though there is promise in their education because they feel affirmed in the social spaces of school. Their esteem and sense of worth as learners is strengthened as they feel “pretty much at the top” (Brad) of their schooling experiences and are recognized at school assemblies. Brad takes comfort in “knowing the teachers” and in acknowledging that “they can help” him. Students feel affiliated with teachers who believe in their abilities and as a result the Aboriginal students felt motivated to excel. Teachers are perceived as willing to assist with students’ schoolwork and have established relationships with these adolescents that are not judgemental or tempered by low expectations. Some students, like Mike, distinguish “the teachers” as the reason they like most about attending school. Alice, too, underscores the positive influence of the teachers and suggests that “they understand that we are teenagers and we do random stuff and they do not judge us.”

These findings are particularly noteworthy as they speak to the positive influence teachers have on Aboriginal students in the context of authentic professional relationships in affirming social spaces. According to the students in the high functioning schools, the teachers do not come across as “think[ing] they know everything.” Students are disengaged by educators who boast of their intellectual superiority; instead, students respect those teachers who honour their epistemologies. Students discern education as a priority, are engaged in their learning and have a positive self-image of themselves as learners.

The high functioning schools also promote students’ socio-emotional development. Brad, like several others, describes his success in elementary school as “awesome” and believes that he “achieved all [his] goals.” For these students the experiences in public education have empowered them to make a successful transition to secondary school. Students feel “great inside” (Brad) when they are empowered to be successful. Rose, like Alice and others, appreciate that “a lot of our teachers give us advice.” As Scott suggests, the school and learning environment have “a lot of love coming around.” Students feel emotionally secure in their schools since it is “a safe” place (Brad) to nurture and grow as an Aboriginal student and person.

The school environment in the low functioning school, however, did not nurture feelings of belonging. Students like Jack cite the colonial myths that are perpetuated by Eurocentric biased curriculum: “We are always betrayed...like we are the bad guys burning down forts.” Students are dismayed by such portrayals of Aboriginal peoples and feel as if it underscores their sense of difference. Feeling already somewhat marginalized, the Aboriginal students do not appreciate teachers “who picked favourites a lot” and “always treat the smarter kids” more favourably (Jack). The Aboriginal

students who do not achieve at the same levels as the non-Aboriginal students feel disengaged when they perceive that the teacher measures their currency in the classroom by their level of achievement. In these instances, the student participants do not want to establish a relationship with their teachers since it only serves to undermine their self-esteem. Emma, on behalf of the other students, expresses her resentment of the teachers in the school who demean some Aboriginal students for their lack of achievement. Emma suggests that it “makes [me] want to hit” the teachers for making belittling comments in front of the class. Feeling little stability in the school, Jack confesses that he “wants to get out of here. I hate elementary school.” For students like Jack, Emma and Julia, there is minimal affirmation of their identity as Aboriginal peoples and learners in the curriculum, pedagogy and social spheres of public schooling. They resign themselves to having to merely endure their elementary school education.

5.2. Principled actions and variability

The students in the high functioning schools expressed their belief that “it is all equal here” (Scott). They describe inclusive environments that do not bestow unfair treatment upon Aboriginal students. Brad, like Scott, believes that Aboriginal students have both “equal rights” in the school and are treated accordingly. Both Brad and Scott discussed the fact that teachers in the school have the best interest of Aboriginal students in mind and readily offer to help students’ “achieve [their] goals” (Brad). Students are highly perceptive of the principled intentions of their teachers and consider them as partners to their success. Alice, reminiscent of the others, appreciates the non-judgemental relationship she shares with teachers and attributes it to the ethical practices of the school: “They [the teachers] understand us and do not judge.” The students in these schools perceive their teachers as having an integral role in both their present and future success. The students trust in their teachers’ professionalism and appreciate the sense of justice that prevails in their relationships with educators. Additionally, students distinguished between principled practices even within their peer relations. Anna, Rose, and Alice were infuriated by the non-Aboriginal students who disrespected the elders that visited the school. Students are particularly sensitive to the social contexts that recognize their distinct identities as Aboriginal peoples. In contrast, students’ perceptions of principled practices are far more positive in inclusive learning environments where teachers have high expectations for all students. They are proud that their teachers contribute meaningfully towards their “achieving [our] goals” and are just as observant of school practices that recognize their worldviews as Aboriginal people.

In these high functioning mainstream public schools there are opportunities for students to establish relationships with elders and other community members. In these instances students like Brad, among others, shares how his “grandma, brothers [and] dad usually come around” since the school is an invitational place where students’ families and communities are welcome to celebrate their traditions. The Aboriginal students feel affirmed in a public institution that honours their family and traditions. This is not to deny that the Aboriginal students in the high functioning schools perceive the unethical bias of a limited curriculum. They distinguish the injustice of having a mere “two pages in the history book about Native people” (Mike) and detect a curriculum that remains non-inclusive and essentially absent of Aboriginal voice. The students are critical about Aboriginal knowledge and worldviews being relegated to “only in History” class (Scott). They recognize that their socio-historical and socio-cultural traditions are stifled by the mainstream curriculum and perceive the injustice of a fragmented curriculum.

The students attending the lower functioning school were equally perceptive of principled practices. Emma and Julia comment that one of their teachers is “better than last year” because he is only “sometimes...a prick.” The students know what distinguishes professional teacher-student relations. They are critical of mainstream teachers who do not relate to the unique context of their lives as Aboriginal children. Emma, Jack and Julia feel that it is wrong for a teacher to flaunt his privilege and resent the fact that they are forced to hear about the wealth of experiences available to their teacher’s children that are not necessarily available to them. According to Jack, “the worst part” is listening to the academic accomplishments of their teacher’s children who get “all 90s.” The students perceive that the teacher uses his children’s academic success to contrast the struggles the Aboriginal learners experience in mainstream schools. This perception is considered an assault on their esteem and an injustice in the classroom.

Moreover, the students in the lower functioning school distinguish the lack of Aboriginal practices and cultural imagery in the school. According to the student participants, Nishnawbe language is not present in the school and only “a couple of posters” (Jack) have cultural representation. Such a lack of representation has little to no positive impact on students in terms of their feeling socially included into the school culture. Jack makes reference to a single event during the school year when a group of elders visited the school but all of the student participants agreed that it had little effect on them. The students recognize these as isolated events that serve to underscore their difference in the mainstream culture of their school.

The Aboriginal students also perceive the injustice in the way that their epistemology is ignored. They are frustrated when they do not understand curricular concepts “that [are] by the book because the book doesn’t explain a lot. That’s what teachers are for” (Jack). Students describe their teachers’ pedagogy as reliant on the printed word – the standardized curriculum and the accompanying textbooks. Emma echoes the frustration of the group by describing some teachers’ paradigms: “This is what you are supposed to learn. This is what I am going to teach you.” Students do not perceive that their individuality as Aboriginal peoples and learners is represented in the classroom and instead are critical of teachers who focus on textbooks at the expense of Aboriginal student epistemologies.

The findings in both of the categories grounded in the data attest to Aboriginal students’ perceptions of the teachers and learning environments of their respective schools, and how these implicated upon their intellectual and social development.

It is clear that the teachers in the high functioning schools that served as the research sites for this study are more responsive to the mandate of the OME policy Framework. These teachers account to a significant extent for the holistic learning preferences of Aboriginal learners and aspire to the academic success of Aboriginal students. These teachers provide school and classroom activities that contribute to the knowledge-base of all students and further an inclusive classroom culture.

Conversely, the participants from the lower functioning school do not have the same meaningful responses to the Framework and as a result Aboriginal students continue to feel marginalized from mainstream educational practices. Students feel as if their self-described difference as Aboriginal people and learners is a detriment to their academic achievement and therefore do not share the same sense of hope and success as the Aboriginal students in the higher functioning schools.

According to Toulouse (2008), Aboriginal student growth and self-esteem are critical to their success in public education hence the school environment needs to be responsive to their needs. In far too many instances Aboriginal students do not feel a sense of belonging to their school cultures and have difficulty relating to the social, curricular, and epistemic components of public education. The findings of this study point to the fact that Aboriginal students consider themselves as having very limited opportunities to enact change. Aboriginal students have become tolerant of the inequitable practices they experience in the social spaces of their schooling. Conversely, other Aboriginal students react aggressively to the lack of principled actions in their classrooms and suffer the consequences of what is considered inappropriate and defiant behaviour.

In the schools that are more responsive to the policy context, relationships between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal learners are mutually understanding (Toulouse 2013). The presence of Aboriginal epistemologies are represented in these schools (Battiste 2007). Under these circumstances, Aboriginal students flourish in the imagination of their individual and collective identity. Inclusive social spaces seem to augment Aboriginal student identity. Students feel comfortable as Aboriginal people and learners in learning environments that emphasize their cultural and epistemic values. The Aboriginal students forge links with teachers who are perceived as attentive to their socio-cultural realities. Students benefit from their education without having to sacrifice their identity. Aboriginal students can contribute to the vitality of their classroom practices as they imagine sustainable socio-cultural contexts of learning. Their perceptions of principled action are not tainted by covert or blatant expressions of racism but rather the Aboriginal students feel a legitimate presence in the social existence of their schools.

Conclusions

There is no denying the complexity of policy implementation across provincial public schools. This study has benefitted from the perceptions of Aboriginal students in high and low functioning schools. Grounded in the voices of the Aboriginal students themselves are two categories that underscore the student-participants sense of self-esteem and their perceptions of principled practices. The findings substantiate the literature that points to the emotional toll that public schooling can enact on Aboriginal schoolchildren. However, the findings also shed light on a more detrimental outcome of culturally unresponsive schools and educators and suggest that in the absence of principled school practices Aboriginal students resign themselves to the inequities of public education. The Aboriginal students in the lower functioning schools are prohibited from realizing their potential, imagining their individual and collective identity, and ultimately from being better positioned to assume the challenges and benefits associated with public schooling.

Citations and References

- Agbo, Seth. 2004. "First Nations perspectives on transforming the status of culture and language in schooling." *Journal of American-Indian Education* 43(1): 1-31.
- Ball, Jessica. 2004. "As if Indigenous knowledge and communities mattered: Transformative education in First Nations communities in Canada." *American Indian Quarterly* 28(3 & 4): 454-479.
- Battiste, Marie. 2002. *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education: A literature review with recommendations*. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Canada.
- Battiste, Marie., Lynne Bell & Len Findlay. 2002. "Decolonizing education in Canadian universities: An interdisciplinary, international, Indigenous research project." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 26(2): 82-95.
- Bell, David. (Ed.). 2004. *Sharing our success: Ten cases in Aboriginal schooling*. Kelowna, BC: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.
- Canada Council on Learning. 2007. *State of learning in Canada: No time for complacency [Report on Learning in Canada 2007]*. Ottawa: Author.
- Card, Noel. 2016. *Applied meta-analysis for social science research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Chartrand, Rebecca. 2012. "Anishinaabe Pedagogy." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 35(1): 144-162.
- Cherubini, Lorenzo. 2007. "Un impianto originale per un progetto di grounded theory: Una riflessione critica." *Encyclopaideia* 21: 101-118.
- Cherubini, Lorenzo. 2010. "An analysis of Ontario Aboriginal education policy: Critical and interpretive perspectives." *McGill Journal of Education* 45(1): 1-32.
- Cherubini, Lorenzo. 2012. "Implications of discourse: A trilogy of educational policy." *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 58(1): 160-164.
- Cherubini, Lorenzo. 2014. *Aboriginal Student Engagement and Achievement: Educational Practices and Cultural Sustainability*. Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press. ISBN: 978-0-7748-2655-6.
- Cherubini, Lorenzo. 2015. "Research in the context of sustainable dialogue: Aboriginal Peoples and educational policy in northern Ontario (Canada)." *International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Science* 19(2): 13-25.
- Corbin, Juliet., & Strauss, Anselm. 1990. "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria." *Qualitative Sociology* 13, (1): 3-20.

- Howard, Albert, & Frances Widdowson. 2013. "Running the gauntlet: Challenging the taboo obstructing Aboriginal education policy development." In F. Widdowson and A. Howard (Eds.), *Approaches to Aboriginal education in Canada*. 288-317. Alberta, Canada: Brush Education.
- Kanu, Yatta. 2002. "In their own voices: First Nations students identify some cultural mediators of their learning in the formal school system." *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 48(2): 98-121.
- Kanu, Yatta. 2011. *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into the School Curriculum: Purposes, Possibilities, and Challenges*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Kawagley, Angayuqaq Oscar, Delena Norris-Tull, & Roger Norris-Tull. 1998. "The Indigenous worldview of Yupiaq culture: Its scientific nature and relevance to the practice and teaching of science." *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 32(2): 133-144.
- Marule, T. R. O. 2012. "Niitsitapi Relational and Experiential Theories in Education." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 35(1): 131-143.
- Moyle, Darcel. 2004. *Quality educators produce quality outcomes – some thoughts on what this means in the context of teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australia's public education system: A report discussion paper on the outcomes of the AEU's Annual Indigenous Education Seminar held in Hobart, January, 2004*. AU: AEU Federal President.
- Ontario Ministry of Education (OME). 2007. Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. Toronto, ON: Aboriginal Education Office. Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiFramework.pdf>.
- Paquette, Jerry, & Gerald Fallon. 2010. *First Nations Education Policy in Canada: Progress or Gridlock?* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Partington, Gary, Kaye Richer, John Godfrey, Mort Harslett, & Bernard Harrison. 1999. Barriers to effective teaching of Indigenous students. [Electronic version]. Paper presented at the Combined Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education and New Zealand Association for Research in Education, Melbourne. Retrieved February 6, 2007 from <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/Abled/quality/Gary%20Partington%20AARE%2009.html>.
- Pirbhai-Illich, Fatima. 2011. "Aboriginal students engaging and struggling with critical multiliteracies." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(4): 257-266. doi:10.1598/JAAL.54.4.3.
- Richards, Jack. 2008. *Closing the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal education gaps* (Paper No. 116). Toronto, ON: C. D. Howe Institute.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 1996. *Gathering strength: Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Canada Communication Group.

- Ryan, A. E. 2006. 'Dancing yet to the dimdums' beat'—Dilemmas in postcolonial science curricula: The case of Papua New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Monash University, Clayton, Australia.
- Ryan, Jim. 1992. "Aboriginal learning styles: A critical review." *Language, culture, and curriculum* 5(3): 161-183.
- Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE). 2009. *Synthesis of Aboriginal education: Cross Canada policy directions*. Retrieved 20 June 2009 from www.sae.ca/index.php?option=com_content&
- Schissel, Bernard., & Wotherspoon, Terry. 2003. *The legacy of school for Aboriginal people: Education, oppression, and emancipation*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Toulouse, Pamela Rose. 2013. Beyond shadows: First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success. *Canadian Teachers' Education*. www.ctf-fce.ca.
- Wotherspoon, Terry. 2008. "Teachers' work intensification and educational contradictions in Aboriginal communities." *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45(4): 389–418.
- Toulouse, Pamela Rose. 2008. Integrating Aboriginal teaching and values into the classroom. *The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat*.
- Young, Mary, Jerri-Lynn Chester, Brenda Mary Flett, Lucy Joe, Laura Marshall, Dorothy Moore, Khea Paul, Florence Paynter, Jennifer Williams & Janice Huber. 2010. "Becoming 'real' Aboriginal teachers: Attending to intergenerational narrative reverberations and responsibilities." *Teachers and Teachings: Theory and Practice*, 16(3): 285-305.