

Deepening Knowledge to Inspire Action: Including Aboriginal Perspectives in Teaching Practice

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Author Note

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Abstract

Deepening Knowledge Project, through Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), undertook research within the Initial Teacher Education program to explore the relationships between teacher candidates and Aboriginal content. Our research question was, "Which strategies used within OISE's Central cohort are most powerful in increasing teacher candidates' willingness and readiness to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogies into their classroom practice?" Data consisted of surveys administered to approximately 70 teacher candidates at three key points in their program as well as two rounds of interviews with five purposively selected participants. We found that teacher candidates most appreciated the inclusion of First Voice perspectives, in-depth instruction on current and historical events, and a continuous examination of privilege as means to prepare them for incorporating Aboriginal content into their future practice. While most students reported feeling more confident and willing to include Aboriginal perspectives near the end of their program, there are three commonly stated questions, reported on preprogram surveys that lead to inaction on Aboriginal inclusion. Addressing these questions directly should help encourage more teachers to take up Aboriginal perspectives in their classrooms.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; teacher education; teacher resistance



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Many beginning and experienced teachers lack knowledge of Indigenous histories and worldviews that would allow them to develop culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies for students who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, and to assist all students in understanding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives (Dion, 2007; Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010). In 2008, a working group of Teacher Education faculty and staff came together based on their shared commitment to infuse Aboriginal education throughout all components of the initial teacher education program at OISE/UT. Since then, the group, known as the Deepening Knowledge Project,¹ has developed and delivered various initiatives in the Initial Teacher Education Program at OISE such as program-wide workshops on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories and current experiences (see Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013), and a popular online repository of teaching resources that address Aboriginal topics. Since 2009, team members have also worked closely with the instructors and students in Central Option, a cohort of approximately 70 elementary teacher candidates (TCs) at OISE/UT with a specific mandate to provide targeted instruction with respect to Aboriginal content. In 2012-2013, members of the Project received a small research grant as part of OISE's Inquiry Into Practice initiative to gather data around this work with teacher candidates. Our research team consisted of two faculty members, the Director of the Secondary B.Ed. program, one graduate student, and one of the instructional coordinators of Central Option, all of whom are members of the Deepening Knowledge Project. Our main research question was: "Which strategies used within Central Option are most powerful in increasing teacher candidates' willingness and readiness to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogies into their classroom practice?"

In the short term, our objectives were to ready Central Option TCs to incorporate their increasing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal issues and perspectives in classrooms through focused instruction, and to identify which instruction and pedagogical strategies, according to them, had the greatest positive impact on their willingness and readiness to teach this material. In the long term, our objective was to disseminate these identified strategies throughout the ITE program, with the ultimate objective to enhance the presence of Aboriginal histories, perspectives, experiences, and cultures in classrooms.

Relevant Literature

Our study is located within the context of teacher education programs at universities across Canada, many of which have begun to document and analyze their initiatives created to bring meaningful instruction in Aboriginal Education to their teacher candidates (Finney & Orr, 1995; Dion, 2009; den Heyer, 2009; Tanaka, 2009; Cherubini, Hodson, Manley-Casimir, & Muir, 2010; Vetter & Blimkie, 2011; Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013). These studies explore initiatives at so-called mainstream institutions, and analyze their impacts in the short term on teacher candidates and/or programming. These initiatives all describe isolated interventions, which fall short of permeating throughout entire preservice teacher education programs. Despite constant change and so-called innovation in teacher education in Canada, preservice teacher training programs continue to echo the European model of education,

which is built upon neoliberal ideals of schooling (Sanford, Williams, Hopper, & McGregor, 2012). These neoliberal foundations set the stage for colonizing spaces that are counter to Indigenous worldviews in that they value “linear over cyclical progression, competition over collaboration, dualism over complexity, and product over process” and indeed, disadvantage not just Indigenous learners but rather fail to “accommodate the learning needs of many students” (Sanford et al., 2012, p. 20).

Shahjahan (2011) notes that in Britain, the United States, and Canada, the entire profession of education is represented in policy as in need of civilizing, evident in colonial discourses that paint it as savage and/or backward, and suggestions that it would benefit from Western/scientific reasoning to improve educational practices. In these three contexts, the increase in emphasis on so-called “evidence-based” educational policy and practices perpetuates colonized power relationships through the entrenchment of evidence, data, and learning outcomes defined by Western European cultural assumptions (Shahjahan, 2011, p. 200). These colonizing discourses are certainly present within the Ontario context.

Instructors at the University of Victoria’s teacher education program are also on a journey to move away from neoliberal discourses and decolonize their offerings. Within the teacher education program, some instructors have taken steps towards adopting an Indigenous framework specifically based upon Lil’wat conceptions and ideals (Sanford et al., 2012). Instead of fully eliminating Eurocentric thought and modes of operation within their program, they have instead embraced what they see as a more inclusive framework:

Indigenous education draws on an organic metaphor for learning that includes diversity as an asset, creating spaces to value and nurture multiple forms of knowing and ways of being in the world. As such, Indigenous education would embrace Eurocentrism as another form of knowing rather than *the* form of knowing. (Sanford et al., 2012, p. 22)

This change began tentatively with a course entitled “Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World” led by Lil’wat scholar Lorna Williams. The course has had many iterations,² which include the participation and guidance of Indigenous wisdom keepers in a setting guided by Lil’wat principles of learning and community. The experience of this course has resulted in the University of Victoria’s teacher education program instituting numerous other courses throughout the program that have an Indigenous focus: the development of inquiry-based courses, different grading procedures to encourage cooperation and community in some offerings, and an option for an alternative practicum. Many of these new initiatives are built on the foundation of the Lil’wat principles which encourage self-directed learning, community building, and a holistic worldview (Sanford et al., 2012, p. 23). Sanford et al. (2012) argue that this indicates a dramatic change in the culture of the entire program at the University of Victoria noting that,

Shifts can be seen and felt in the way the program is offered, the ways in which students’ contributions to the program have been recognized and valued, and the ways in which Indigenous ways of knowing have become integral to the overall program. (p. 25)

The experience at the University of Victoria indicates that a particular catalyst, in this case the Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World course can have widespread impact, despite beginning as an individual and discrete strategy.

Teacher Candidate Identity and Resistance

In Ontario, there exists a fairly stable demographic of teacher education students, made up of mainly white, heterosexual, middle class women, with some increase in the number of minority students (Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005), resulting from our University's location in downtown Toronto and OISE's efforts to increase diversity in population through targeted initiatives such as equity questions on the admission application. Like other mainstream teacher education programs across the country, many teacher candidates enter our program ignorant of their social privilege and the existence of White supremacy (Solomona et al., 2005; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Lack of awareness of their privilege, and the assumption on the part of White and/or Canadian teacher candidates that they have a neutral culture or no culture at all can lead to problematic assumptions regarding their Aboriginal students, which serves to reify colonizing discourses in their approach to teacher training:

The equating of good with white permits education students to think that they are going to learn of the other, to learn how they can be helpers, to discover how to incorporate practices of the dominant society. This is the assumption of superiority that whiteness permits: what we have and who we are is what the world needs, whether it wants it or not. (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 308)

Whiteness is then connected to notions of respectability, and so to be considered a respectable citizen or teacher, one must take up the normalized attributes, values, and beliefs of White society (Fellows & Razack, 1998). These beliefs can also cause teachers and teacher candidates to view their role in teaching Aboriginal content as assisting their Aboriginal students to define their own culture (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Cannon (2012) reminds us that colonialism is not only something in which Indigenous peoples are involved, but also a reality in which settlers are implicated, arguing that within Initial Teacher Education, curriculum should be present that creates encounters between non-Indigenous peoples and histories of settler colonialism (Cannon, 2012). For non-Indigenous teacher candidates this means it is necessary for them to explore their relationship with Indigenous peoples and the history and present reality of colonialism, whether they hold a settler or settler-diasporic identity (Cannon, 2012). This includes thinking through "matters of restitution, their own decolonization, and transforming their complicity in ongoing dispossession" (Cannon, 2012, p. 22).

Members of our research team have witnessed teacher candidate resistance to Aboriginal content during in-class presentations across the ITE program when teacher candidates learn about the history and present oppression of Indigenous peoples on this land. The resistances felt throughout this presentation process seem to be typical of attempts to discuss race and racism with mostly non-Aboriginal students in a teacher education setting (Aveling, 2006). Aveling (2006) recognizes that conversations about race (and we extend this to the colonized history and present of Aboriginal peoples in our

society) are very hard conversations to have with teacher candidates because “exploring ‘race’ and racism with White students goes to the very heart of our socially constructed identities” (Aveling, 2006, p. 264).

In the past, that resistance has taken many forms. Whether teacher candidates are White, or whether they have an identity tied into a diasporic settler community (which is often true in our program (Cannon, 2012), candidates from across the program will argue that their families work hard and deserve their success, for instance, and that Aboriginal people just need to stop being lazy in order to achieve the same degree of integration. Spoken resistances such as this most often reflect a misunderstanding of the colonial foundations of Canada, and reveal a lack of awareness on the part of teacher candidates of their own social privilege (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 300).

Many authors argue that what ultimately stands in the way of teacher candidates taking up Aboriginal content in their classrooms is their identity, which includes the investments that non-Aboriginal teachers have in the Canadian state (Kaomea, 2005; Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2011). Teacher education programs are heavily invested in shaping the identity of a teacher, and most often this occurs in ways that support the existence of the Canadian state and reinforce national identities. One site noted in Waldorf’s (2012) study of the OISE’s teacher education curriculum in the Secondary Consecutive program was the School and Society course, where issues of social justice are most likely to be addressed in our university’s ITE program. Although the course varies depending on the perspectives and research interests of the particular instructors who teach it across the program, Waldorf’s (2012) study of course outlines and associated readings found that the most prevalent discourse related to settler colonialism and Indigeneity across the program was “that the nation state is a good and necessary vehicle for addressing social inequalities” (p. 65). OISE’s program is thus not exempt from colonizing discourses that deny Indigenous histories and sovereignty. Waldorf (2012) also noted that a core theme in both the secondary program’s Teacher Education Seminar course and the Psychological Foundations of Learning and Development course is “the development of “good” or “expert” teachers, which her review found is an “underlying logic of teacher education pedagogies more generally” (p. 102). These discourses are not unique to OISE, but rather are present in teacher training in general, where multiple investments in the identity of teacher education exist. Donald (2009) argues:

When we consider that so much of teacher education is predicated on the need for the individual who wants to be a teacher to conform to predetermined identity roles that suits institutional needs, demonstrate normalized competence in these contexts, and unconsciously conflate teacher thinking with teacher identity, we begin to understand the intense postcultural dynamics that are invested in the creation of a teacher. (p. 29)

These identity roles and discourses around teaching play out into teacher practice in the classroom, influencing teachers as they navigate their roles and responsibilities in relation to their students. In her work observing teachers plan and deliver stories about Indigenous peoples in their classrooms, Dion (2009) identified three “discourses of professionalism” which she argues are key components of a “complex grid of ideas about what (is) required by teachers as professionals and what they, in wanting to be good

teachers, are invested in” (p. 177). These discourses are *teaching well*, *pastoral care*, and *citizenship education*. Teaching well includes “questions about engaging student attention by ensuring the relevance of context, meeting curriculum expectations, and providing students with opportunities to develop their skills and master new vocabulary” (Dion, 2009, p.93). Pastoral care includes a desire to take care of their students, and their emotions in the midst of teaching about oppression, how they could “maintain order and... ask questions [students] would be able to answer” (Dion, 2009, p.93). And finally citizenship education was displayed by the history teachers in the study who felt it was their responsibility to nurture good citizens (Dion, 2009, p. 93). Even if they are exposed to Aboriginal histories and current events, any change that might come to their practice as a result may be mediated by these discourses, and other identity markers (Kanu, 2011).

Another phenomenon that Dion (2009) observed in her work was the existence of what she terms the “Perfect Stranger” (p.179) identity, where she observed non-Aboriginal teachers who claimed with ease that they knew nothing about Indigenous people, and had absolutely no relationship with them (p.179). This position, she argues, is supported by the fear of controversy and of offending and challenging what is the dominant narrative of what Canada (Dion, 2009, p.179).

Because of these problematic identities, when teachers bring Indigenous content into their classes, the way they frame the content is often problematic (Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2011; Kaomea, 2005). Kanu (2011) found that the teachers in her study, rather than critically examining colonial past and present in this nation, couched this material in a framework of multiculturalism, which many Indigenous peoples and their allies argue is a vehicle for further assimilation (St. Denis & Schick, 2003; Wilmot, 2005; Kanu, 2011). Kanu (2011) also documented a lack of confidence in teachers to address Indigenous subject matter in class, with teacher candidates worried about “the right” to teach the material as non-Aboriginal teachers (p.180). Teachers in Kanu’s study strongly felt that strengthening professional efficacy was needed to increase their confidence and their ability to teach the material, along with being able to access classroom-ready resources. Teachers also cited perceived professional vulnerability and the lack of time as to why they did not take up the material (Kanu, 2011).

Without recognition of their privilege and the role of White supremacist and colonial assumptions in the creation of their own identity and their view of students, teacher candidates are ultimately poised to recreate those discourses in their future classrooms.

Stages of the Project

This project unfolded within the greater context of the ongoing work of the Deepening Knowledge Project. Our initial question was based on our desire to know what instructional strategies employed within Initial Teacher Education were most effective at inspiring teacher candidates to take up Aboriginal content when teaching their own classes. We were aware from previous instruction of teacher candidates across our program that almost all teacher candidates claimed very little knowledge of Aboriginal histories and experiences, and that some resisted the topics surrounding Aboriginal communities (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013). In the initial survey, we accounted for

those experiences. During this time, the team was led by Central Option Instructional Leader Nancy Steele, who developed strategies to incorporate Aboriginal topics into her program. These topics included the following:

- a presentation from team members Angela Nardozi and John Doran on Aboriginal histories, worldviews, and perspectives;
- a retreat to the Toronto Islands with community members and Elders to hear stories of the area;
- a requirement to use a picture book with a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit theme in their practicum placement;
- a major inquiry assignment into teaching Aboriginal content, the results of which were shared by teacher candidates with their classmates;
- a workshop run by First Nations teacher and scholar Pamela Toulouse; the use of Pamela Toulouse's (2011) text *Achieving Aboriginal Student Success: A Guide for K to 8 Classrooms* in Central Option; and
- many more specifically targeted activities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Our team collected data from the Central Option teacher candidates through three surveys, one administered at the beginning of the program, and one administered at the end of each of the two practicums. Surveys were administered in class; participants included all those teacher candidates who were present on the day of the surveys. Data collected was both closed and open ended.

The first set of surveys revealed three concerns voiced by teacher candidates regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content in the work. The team reframed these themes as questions to ask of the teacher candidates as a way to tackle the reticence head-on. The questions were as follows:

- Why should I prioritize Aboriginal history, issues, and perspectives when there are many social justice issues that the students in my classes have?
- How do I fit in these Aboriginal topics when there is so little time?
- Should I start to teach about these things even if I feel I don't know enough?

These questions reflect in part the findings of Kanu (2011) and Kaomea (2005) who observed that teacher candidates framed the teaching of Indigenous issues in a greater context of multiculturalism and of Dion (2009) regarding the "Perfect Stranger" identity position. The concerns also reveal a lack of confidence in teaching Indigenous content, similarly observed in the work of Kanu (2011).

In addition to the surveys, five teacher candidates were recruited for two rounds of one-on-one interviews with a research assistant. The questions used in the interviews were open ended. Interviews were coded separately by three members of the research team, and afterwards codes were synthesized together.

Challenges

Our five interview participants were chosen because their survey responses expressed a range of perceptions of their own readiness to incorporate this material. All five reported

that they felt incorporating Aboriginal content into their future classrooms was important. We explicitly sought the input of participants who reported on the survey that this content was unimportant, but none came forward for the interviews. Future research must find creative ways to explore the views of those who uphold status quo positions.

Impact

Based on the surveys that were collected, the research team witnessed a shift in the self-reported knowledge of both histories and contemporary issues regarding Aboriginal peoples and communities (these self-perceptions, however, were not verified by formal testing) (see shaded boxes below). See Tables 1 and 2 below for a summary of the closed-ended responses.

Table 1

Reported Knowledge of Aboriginal Histories Over the Three Surveys

Entry	Midpoint	Closing	
(4%)	(2%)	(2%)	I have studied these histories carefully and have an extensive knowledge of the histories of Aboriginal peoples of Canada.
(10%)	(30%)	(38%)	I have fairly extensive knowledge of the histories of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
(58%)	(64%)	(60%)	I have some knowledge of the histories of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
(28%)	(2%)	0	I have little knowledge of these histories.

Table 2

Reported Knowledge of Current Aboriginal Issues Over the Three Surveys

Entry	Midpoint	Closing	
(4%)	(11%)	(9%)	I have extensive knowledge of the current issues and events involving Aboriginal peoples of Canada.
(10%)	(38%)	(51%)	I have fairly extensive knowledge of the current issues and events involving Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
(63%)	(49%)	(40%)	I have some knowledge of the current issues and events involving Aboriginal peoples.

(22%)	0	0	I have little knowledge of these current issues and events.
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By the end of the year, there was a major shift in self-perceived readiness to incorporate Aboriginal histories and content into future practice, from what the teacher candidates self-reported in the beginning of the year (see Table 3 below). Teachers were asked “How ready do you feel to incorporate Aboriginal content in your curriculum at this time?”

Table 3

Self-Perceived Readiness to Teach Aboriginal Content Over the Three Surveys

ENTRY	MIDPOINT	CLOSING	
(10%)	(13%)	(10%)	Very ready
(7%)	(34%)	(48%)	Ready
(34%)	(47%)	(36%)	Somewhat ready
(49%)	(6%)	(6%)	Not ready

Implications and Practical Applications

Four Findings

From both the interview data and the qualitative responses on the surveys emerged the following four findings:

1. We see a need in Teacher Education for extensive instruction around the histories and current experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.
2. Teacher candidates report a need for demonstrations of what teaching this material looks like.
3. The perspective that Aboriginal content is only for Aboriginal students presents challenges for teacher candidate willingness and readiness.
4. First Voice testimony has a high impact on Teacher Candidate learning. We will discuss each in turn.

We see a need in Teacher Education for extensive instruction around the histories and current experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Upon entry to the program, the majority of teacher candidates reported having some or little knowledge of histories and current experiences of Aboriginal peoples and communities. The following two quotations from teacher candidates are representative of the comments registered on surveys at the beginning of the year: “I don’t know enough at all. I want to have a sound, confident knowledge base in order for me to teach this curriculum respectfully” (S8, survey, September 2012),³ and “Really want to incorporate it, but am afraid of

stereotyping or offending people with Aboriginal background” (S53, survey, September 2012). These comments highlight the fear expressed by many teacher candidates of offending Aboriginal peoples and continuing cycles of misrepresentation through their teaching. Some teacher candidates were inspired by their self-perceived lack of knowledge to learn more and to pass the information on to their students: “I feel that it is shameful that I am Canadian and yet know practically nothing. I want to be the change” (S42, survey, September 2012).

Many of those surveyed mentioned that they found the overview presentation by Doran and Nardozi helpful in increasing their knowledge and showing them what they did not know. When in their practicum placements, teacher candidates sometimes felt support from their associate teachers and sometimes-felt resistance from them when proposing lessons that included Aboriginal content. Teacher candidates reported that very few associate teachers expressed confidence in teaching this material, and so teacher candidates often took the lead in designing and delivering these lessons. The above observations have implications for school boards, who may, upon close examination, find that the majority of their teachers also lack the knowledge and confidence to teach Aboriginal content to their students (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010).

The teacher candidates report a need for demonstrations of what teaching this material looks like. While the self-reported knowledge level of teacher candidates increased as the program progressed, teacher candidates still expressed a desire to see concrete examples of what the teaching of Aboriginal content in the classroom looked like in practice. Some commented that since they had never witnessed any of their teachers offer appropriate and thorough lessons about Aboriginal histories or communities throughout their years in school, they could not picture or begin to imagine what these lessons would look like in their own classrooms.

Some teacher candidates became comfortable with their lack of “expert knowledge” and took on the role of learner alongside their students. “You start learning about those things with your class. If you don’t know enough then that is a wonderful opportunity to learn with your class and to show your class that as a teacher you’re not an expert, you are part of the learning community and you make that collaborative event with your student; you make your classroom stronger” (P3, interview, April 2013). Others built comfort over time by using resources shared with them by their instructors: “The Deepening Knowledge website was a great resource, and by following their recommendations for texts and lessons, I got over my nervousness” (P2, interview, April 2013).⁴

The perspective that Aboriginal content is only for Aboriginal students presents challenges for teacher candidate willingness and readiness. Comments on surveys suggested that continued work with teacher candidates is required to build understanding of the workings of colonization that have had a formative impact on Canada’s founding and development and continue to evolve in the relationship between Aboriginal people and all Canadians today. This work would have to be accompanied by an examination of privilege and of implication in settler colonialism (Cannon, 2012). In the following survey comments from teacher candidates, it is evident that they did not perceive the foundational nature of Aboriginal issues on this land, nor of the intersections between

different social-justice issues. “Aboriginal content is important but I feel like there are also many other equally important topics I would need to communicate to my students (e.g. Environment sustainability, etc.)” (S25, survey, September 2012), “Although I value the importance of Aboriginal content, I would feel that all students need to become aware of this content as well as others that represent themselves. Therefore, I would seek to find a balance between Aboriginal and other cultural content” (S19, survey, September 2012), and “I feel it’s important not to over-emphasize any particular culture, even if they are marginalized.” (S37, survey, September 2012)

By the end of the year, some teacher candidates were able to tie their identity and their understanding of their relationship to Aboriginal communities and colonization together with their vision for their future teaching practice.

In terms of my identity as a teacher, I am part of the dominant culture. I’ve benefited directly from the colonization of North America, which has resulted in the suffering and disintegration of the First Peoples to inhabit Turtle Island. I can act as an ally in terms of educating my future students to be anti-racist and anti-colonialist in how they see and engage with the world, both inside and outside of the classroom. (P2, interview, May 2013)

Teacher candidates who had a deeper understanding coming into the program, or who developed such an understanding of these topics as a result of the curriculum, felt that they and their peers would benefit from more explicit discussion in class around the concepts of colonialism, racism, decolonization and appropriation.

First Voice testimony has a high impact on Teacher Candidate learning. Survey respondents and interview participants repeatedly mentioned the impact Indigenous guest speakers and Elders had on their learning. Teacher candidates consistently asked to hear from a variety of Indigenous community members, so that diverse voices were represented in their learning and teaching. While they stated that they had learned from their non-Indigenous instructors at OISE, one interview participant commented that “I think I’d benefit more from the authentic (voice) of the elder associated here at OISE” (P5, interview, December 2012). Interview and survey comments about Elders like this one made it clear that OISE as an institution was seen by teacher candidates as an authority in verifying the “authenticity” of Elders. This may be especially true for teacher candidates who do not have a relationship with Aboriginal communities outside of the program, who are likely in the majority. As a result, our institution and other mainstream institutions have a responsibility to recognize that Indigenous communities have their own protocols of recognizing Elders, and should take direction from Indigenous communities when appointing or consulting. A concern that has emerged from this study and the accompanying work is how we can continue to include Indigenous voices without being a burden on Indigenous communities who are in the process of revitalizing their own practices (Simpson, 2011). One obvious way is to ensure that more Indigenous faculty and staff are employed at OISE, and other ITE programs, specifically in the teacher education program.

Conclusion

Many implications have arisen from this study for our own work and for Initial Teacher Education programs across Canada. It is clear that the majority of candidates entering into a B.Ed. program in mainstream institutions have little knowledge of Aboriginal content, and if they recognize the importance of including this material in their future curriculum, they still lack the confidence to enact it. With targeted instruction, an emphasis on First Nations' voice and perspective, and an exploration of teacher candidate identity, self-perceived knowledge and confidence levels can rise, and teacher candidates may leave the program with an increased willingness and readiness to include Aboriginal content into their future teaching. Special attention, however, must be paid to the exploration of teacher candidate identity and its intersections with settler colonialism, as this is often a site of resistance. Future studies should strive to dialogue with teacher candidates who continue to resist Aboriginal content throughout their program, in order to gain insight into their perceptions and attitudes and work towards strategies to engage them in this work.

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Endnotes

¹ <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge>

² One such iteration was the "Earth Fibres" course which was documented in Tanaka (2009).

³ Respondents are anonymized, and we have identified responses used codes. Codes which begin with S indicate the quotation came from a written survey and codes which begin with P indicate the response was given during a one-on-one interview.

⁴ The Deepening Knowledge Project has mounted a repository of teacher resources related to Aboriginal topics on the internet. It can be accessed at www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge