

Editorial

Guest Editors: Rainey Gaywish and Frank Deer, University of Manitoba;
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Sherry Peden, University College of the North; Dwayne Donald, University of Alberta

For the second time, *in education* has worked with the executive of CSSE's Canadian Association for the Study of Indigenous Education (CASIE) on a special issue focusing on Indigenous education. The executive committee of CASIE served on the guest editorial committee: Rainey Gaywish (President), Frank Deer and Mark Aquash (Vice Presidents), Sherry Peden (Secretary Treasurer), along with Dwayne Donald (CASIE Sage and former President) and a great deal of support from the *in education* editorial staff, Patrick Lewis (Editor-in-Chief) and Shuana Niessen (Managing Editor).

The publication of this special Indigenous education issue (Part I) coincides with the formal unveiling of an agreement between the Federal Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations to proceed with the final drafting of the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act (FNCFNEA). The Act, signed by Prime Minister Harper in Stand Off, Alberta on February 7, 2014, commits

\$1.9-billion [over 3 years, starting in 2016] in additional funding aimed at creating a viable education system on reserves with standards for students and teachers that equate to those that operate elsewhere in Canada. ([National Post](#), 2014, February 7)

The call for papers for this special issue on Aboriginal education articulated a number of the underlying tensions and issues that are being expressed by First Nations concerning the formation and implementation of this Act. Schools on reserve as well as in rural and urban areas are facing complex challenges in advancing the development of culturally safe, culturally relevant education that respects the rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators are exploring how Indigenous knowledge—Aboriginal peoples ways of being and ways of knowing—can be applied to positively impact the schooling experience of today's students.

This special issue includes eight articles by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators/researchers. Although it was difficult to organize the articles into themes because of the scope of topics and issues that they address, three broad themes came together in what might be characterized as an uneasy kinship.

Two articles in this special issue reflect on aspects of the experience of teachers. The Hellsten, Preston, Prytula, and Jeancart article is a study by a mix of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal teacher/researchers on the issues that impact on neophyte Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan public schools. Their focus is on how best to prepare new Aboriginal teachers for a profession that is known to be particularly challenging for all beginning teachers. Burleigh and Burm offer a reflective piece as non-Indigenous teachers working in an Indigenous context on unpacking their own White privilege to advance their understanding of teaching within Indigenous contexts.

Three articles broadly address teachers as learners and learners as teachers. Lee Anne Block discusses “teaching about difference in locations or contexts where the majority of teacher candidates were of the dominant culture,” toward the development of a pedagogy for teaching about difference. In the second article of this set, Wilmot, Begoray, and Banister describe their research with Aboriginal students to understand the processes through which adolescents develop critical media health literacy as media-affected adolescents in the 21st century. The goal of the research was the creation of culturally sensitive material that would be representative of Aboriginal youth identities. Kulnieks, Longboat, and Young share their work on an EcoJustice Education framework to educate teachers about Indigenous and environment education through engagement with the places within which learners live.

Three articles address aspects of the larger context in which Aboriginal education, and respect for the rights and place of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society within education, continue to evolve. Mark Aquash focuses on the impact of the evolution of geopolitical and policy relationships between First Nations and the colonial regimes on First Nation education today. Danielle Lorenz investigates how culturally inclusive education and anti-racist education philosophies work together as potential approaches to decolonizing Canadian K-12 schools. Laura-Lee Kearns shares the results of research she completed on the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework as a case study on the impact their participation in the Aboriginal education program initiatives formed under this policy has had on Indigenous and non-Indigenous administrators, teachers, and youth.

Each contributor has addressed a particular aspect of the issues affecting Indigenous education in Canada that are created as a result of our history of colonial relations. The articles in this issue, taken together, begin to convey the complexity of the issues that policy and practice concerning Aboriginal education—and the new First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act—will continue to shape.

We welcome our readers back in the spring when we will publish Part II of this special Indigenous education issue.