Teacher Education Series

Culturally Relevant Aboriginal Education

Nicole Bell
Trent University

Terrylynn Brant
Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada

Pearson
Toronto
Contents

About the Teacher Education Series  iv
About the Authors  iv
Introduction  iv
Learning Objectives 1

Part 1  Conceptual Overview 2

Traditional Aboriginal Education 2
History of Aboriginal Education in Canada 4
Rationale for Addressing Aboriginal Education Needs 6
The Need for Developing a Cultural Identity 7
The Need for Culturally Inclusive Spaces 8
Schools’ Potential for Building Positive Intercultural Relationships 8
Creating Culturally Inclusive Educational Spaces: Implications for Practice 9
Culture-Based Education as Transformative Educational Praxis 10
The Maori Educational Movement 11
Healing from the Internalization of Colonization 12
The Aboriginal Transformation Process 13
The Concept of the Circle 15
The Land as Receptacle of World View 16
Storytelling and Aboriginal Pedagogy 17

Best Practices in the Classroom 19
Developing Effective Aboriginal Curriculum and Pedagogy 19
Identifying and Dealing with Bias in Materials 21

Part 2  Practical Applications for Classroom Use 22

Colonization and Its Effects: Activating Activities 22
Notes on Pedagogy 30
Media Literacy Activities 30
Oral History Activities 35
Taking Action Activities 39

Part 3  Case Studies 43

Case Study 1: Ensuring Accuracy in Aboriginal History Teaching 43
Case Study 2: Handling Racism 44
Case Study 3: Learning to Respond to Insensitive Media Coverage 46
Case Study 4: Handling Name Calling 47

References 49
Index 51
About the Teacher Education Series

Canadian Faculties of Education enrol teacher candidates in Concurrent or Consecutive Education Courses or In-service Programs aimed at professional development of practising teachers. While each of these programs has its own set of unique learning objectives, all teacher candidates share the quest for up-to-date information covering current educational research and teaching trends.

The Pearson Teacher Education Series is a modular publishing program covering hot and timely topics, such as the use of technology in education, gender equity issues, and integrating Aboriginal culture into your educational practice. These new and cutting edge modules, authored by leaders in the field of education, all follow the same format highlighting theories and examples, practical applications for the classroom, and case studies.

Continue to visit the Pearson Teacher Education Series throughout the year as it will continue to grow over time.

About the Authors

Nicole Bell is Anishinaabe from Kitigan Zibi First Nation in Quebec and is from the Bear Clan. Nicole has an Honours B.A. in Indigenous Studies and a B.Ed. with an Ontario Teaching Certificate for junior/intermediate divisions. She has an M.Ed. from Queen’s University and a D.Phil. from Trent University. Nicole is the founder of a JK to Grade 12 Anishinaabe culture-based school that provided traditional Anishinaabe values and world view in a contemporary educational context. She is also the mother of five boys. Nicole is currently an assistant professor at Trent University with the School of Education and the Department of Indigenous Studies, and Adjunct Faculty with the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University.

Terrylynn Brant, B.A., B.Ed., M.Sc., Mohawk Turtle Clan, traditional name Sera:sera, lives and works in her home community of Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. For the past twenty-seven years she has taught JK to Grade 8 as well as NSL Mohawk language and Indigenous Science for the Native Teacher Education programs at Brock and Queen’s University. Sera:sera is a frequent lecturer at various universities and gatherings on a wide variety of topics, from Native Education and Dreaming to Traditional Gardening Practices and Lifestyles. She lives lightly on Mother Earth, completely off the grid on solar power, tending bees, gardens, and her orchard. She has four daughters and two grandsons, and is currently a vice principal.

Introduction

Learning about the history, culture, and issues that affect the Original peoples* of Canada has become an integral part of young people’s education in our country. Many approaches to teaching Aboriginal children and about Aboriginal people are unique and require significant sensitivity. Teachers also need to be creative and dynamic when developing these approaches and programs. Our underlying purpose here is to extend teachers’ skills and knowledge in the teaching of Aboriginal children and about Original People of Canada.

*The term Original peoples is used to refer to the three main groups of first peoples, namely the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The term Aboriginal is also used as it represents the same three groups.