

Struggles and Triumphs

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The theme of this issue of the journal is "Struggles and Triumphs." It contains four articles, each of which addresses a different aspect of the many challenges that face First Nations educators. The first article, by Opal Charters-Voght, documents a workshop that was designed to help a community take more real and meaningful control over its education, and thus to achieve the real goals of parental responsibility and local control as set out in the 1973 policy of "Indian control of Indian education." In addition, it tells us about the outcomes of the workshop one year later.

The article by Floy Pepper and Steven Henry addresses an area of inner struggle for many people—that of "feeling good about yourself." The authors give us a perspective for looking at self-esteem and for healing based on the Medicine Wheel and outline some of the implications of this approach for teachers and parents who wish to help First Nations children.

Cariboo Tribal Council has given permission to publish a report of one of their recent studies, and it appears in this issue with the title "Faith Misplaced." It is unusual, and perhaps even unique, in scholarly publication of First Nations issues. We know that one of the most important challenges to First Nations community integrity is to acknowledge and to deal with a legacy of abuse. That is a challenge that must be met as an initial step in healing in many of the communities in which we live. Facing that challenge requires courage. It requires courage to allow others to be witness to the research findings. In making this work available to a wider audience, part of that process of healing is shared. The editors acknowledge, with respect and thanks, the courage of Cariboo Tribal Council.

Ray Barnhardt's survey of indigenous postsecondary programs addresses a third area of struggle: that of establishing and maintaining postsecondary programs appropriate for First Nations peoples. In the article he gives us a useful review of several types of program and in addition brings together some of the factors that have made these programs "triumphant."

The article by Wendy Wickwire points to yet another area of struggle: the fight against distorted, simplistic views of First Nations peoples by outsiders who do not appear to be immersed in the culture. This final article shows that, even in 1991, such biased positions are still being put forward in the academic press, which emphasizes that, in consequence, we need to be constantly vigilant.

The theme was taken from the title of an autobiography: its author, P.T. Barnum, felt that he had struggled up from a position of adversity and had triumphed, but had had to repeat this process many times during the course of his life. It is this aspect that is reflected in this issue: the need to struggle constantly

against the challenges and threats around us. We must strengthen both the inner and outer aspects of ourselves and of our children, of our schools, and of our communities, so that we may triumph. Truly, the answers are within us.

The logo on the cover of this issue of the journal is that of the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia. The mandate of the House of Learning is to make the resources of the university more accessible to BC's First Peoples, and to improve the ability of the university to meet the needs of the First Nations.