

# Editorial: Exemplary Indigenous Education

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This theme edition, *Exemplary Indigenous Education*, contains articles that discuss Indigenous principles, approaches, or components that contribute to educational success in Indigenous contexts. In this particular *Canadian Journal of Native Education (CJNE)* theme edition, *exemplary* means that some aspect of Indigenous education is commendable and is working to improve teaching and learning. The articles selected acknowledge the contextual triumphs and struggles people experience in order to provide quality education. The authors offer their articles in the spirit of sharing their stories of lived experience and stories of research. Our Elders teach us to make our own meaning through stories we encounter and to learn from others' experiences.

Each article honors Indigenous ways of knowing and sharing. Each article takes us back to the traditional teachings of fostering respect, responsibility, reverence, relationships, and reciprocity with learners. Each author also moves Indigenous education forward by showing that success happens with concentrated and sustained effort. We need to engage in more research that examines success and to use what we learn from research to make educational improvements at all levels.

We begin with Shirley Sterling's article "Yetko and Sophie: Nlakapamux Cultural Professors." In Indigenous learning contexts we often seek guidance and look to the wisdom of Elders to gain direction for developing our understandings of things that matter. Shirley Sterling shares the teachings that came from grandmothers Yetko and Sophie of the Nlakapamux people of British Columbia. The power of traditional stories is demonstrated, and one life experience story is used as an educational model to develop criteria for success, especially for contemporary education and for living a good life. The grandmother professors show that by teaching the younger generation the traditional cultural teachings in ways that honor Nlakapamux knowledge and the learner, they continue the powerful intergeneration cycle of learning, caring, and sharing. Shirley is also a grandmother who continues to teach in the tradition of her grandmother cultural professors.

Fyre Jean Graveline also shows how Indigenous cultural traditions shape an exemplary educational program in her article "Teaching Tradition Teaches Us." The staff of the First Nations and Aboriginal Counsell-

ing Degree (FNAC) program at Brandon University, Manitoba, is challenged to revitalize and offer Aboriginal traditional healing and teaching strategies while students are also learning Western counselling theories and methods. Fyre Jean Graveline identifies theoretical, pedagogical, and curricular components of FNAC that make it successful. The lived stories of those involved with the program and the story of the evolving nature of the program shows the strength of leadership of the staff, Steering Committee, Elders, and community members involved with FNAC. The tensions and contradictions that people face in the FNAC ultimately lead to individual and institutional transformations where Indigenous knowledge and traditions have a more respected place in academe. Fyre Jean creatively shows how teaching tradition teaches us to develop and implement exemplary education.

In "Creating Methodological Space: A Literature Review of Kaupapa Maori Research," Leonie Pihama, Fiona Cram, and Sheila Walker share research of Maori education graduate students and faculty at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Kaupapa Maori research uses a Maori framework rooted in Maori world view, language, culture, and politics. It advances a self-determination and transformation agenda of individuals, families, communities, and educational institutions. The authors trace the beginnings and revitalization of Kaupapa Maori using six principles first posited by Maori scholar Graham Smith: self-determination, cultural aspirations, culturally preferred pedagogy, socioeconomic mediation, extended family, and collective philosophy principles. An educational system has been developed that spans early childhood to postsecondary/tertiary levels. This educational system is exemplary because it produces bilingual, bicultural Maori students who have positive self-esteem and who succeed in school. The Auckland university Maori scholars are building a strong research literature that shows that Indigenous world views and knowledges can result in exemplary education.

The issue ends with an article that takes us back to key people who can make a significant difference to Indigenous children: their teachers. We started with the effective impact of grandmother professors and move to effective Indigenous teachers. Russell Bishop, Mere Berryman, and Cath Richardson build on the Kaupapa Maori research approach as they identify personal attributes and pedagogical skills of exemplary Maori teachers who teach literacy programs in Maori language immersion schools in their article "Te Toi Huarewa: Effective Teaching and Learning in Total Immersion Maori Language Educational Settings." The researchers found that the Maori teachers' personal skills and pedagogy are culturally based. For example, the family and extended family concept guides the teachers' belief and practice to ensure that students care for and respect one another, and see themselves as a "family." These teachers establish collaborative partnerships with the child's extended family. These teachers know in

depth their subject matter and cultural knowledge. They are passionate about teaching, use nonconfrontational behavior management, reflect on their teaching, and have high expectations. This study contains many more salient points and examples of what makes these Maori teachers effective. The Indigenous methodology used by Russell, Mere, and Cath shows that exemplary Indigenous teachers use their culturally based world views and knowledges to create positive learning environments and experiences for Indigenous children.