Indigenizing Education in Canada

Background Paper for RCAP

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> Indigenizing education means that every subject at every level is examined to consider how and to what extent current content and pedagogy reflect the presence of Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples and the valid contribution of Indigenous knowledge. (Marlene Brant Castellano, 2014)

Introduction

The authors, Jo-ann Archibald and Jan Hare were asked to prepare this background paper about *Indigenizing Education in Canada* to stimulate reflection, analysis, and identification of policy priorities for the November 2016 Forum on *Sharing the Land, Sharing a Future.* We appreciated this opportunity to engage in these processes while we wrote this paper. Following Coast Salish tradition, we raise our hands in thanks and respect to all the people who have been involved in Indigenous education over the years. The many diverse Indigenous educational pathways throughout this country were started by these Indigenous educators and others who worked at local, provincial, and national levels to make education more meaningful for Indigenous learners and to make Indigenous education accessible, relevant, and meaningful for all learners across Canada. Today, we have more opportunities to discuss, debate, and determine what constitutes Indigenous education and ways to Indigenize education because of the individual and collective efforts and commitment of these early educators.

The quote above by Marlene Brant Castellano, former RCAP Co-Director of Research, identifies complex and important criteria for what constitutes the notion of Indigenizing education. RCAP's educational recommendations, if carried out would also achieve the vision as noted by Castellano. RCAP presented a challenge for all involved in lifelong education to improve learning for Aboriginal learners through positive working relationships between educators and Aboriginal people and through using forms of Indigenous knowledge to provide relevant, respectful teaching and learning approaches. Ultimately, the recommendations recognized the importance of local control of education and family/community engagement that formed the basis of the 1972 *Indian Control of Indian Education Policy.*

This background paper addresses the following questions: What does Indigenizing education mean? Why is it important? What does it look like? What are the issues? We have used a lifelong conceptual framework, following RCAP's life cycle of child, youth, adult, and Elder (Chapter 5: Education, p. 446), but instead, we have aligned, child with early childhood education, youth with K-12 education, adult with post-secondary education, and Elder with community education (see Figure 1). We used the major RCAP educational recommendations associated with these lifelong educational phases to guide the discussion of these questions. We focused our attention to actions on these recommendations in the past 20 years.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

POLICY-PROGRAM-CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

K - 12

POST SECONDARY

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

COMMUNITY
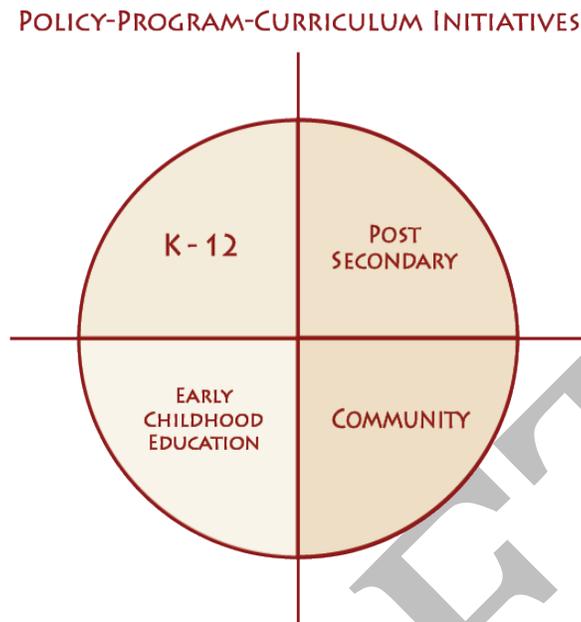
Indigenizing Early Childhood Education

Indigenous early childhood education and care services, wherein Indigenous children learn from and are cared for by centre-based and/or program based settings that are designed and operated by Indigenous peoples and communities are central to the recommendations of RCAP. Recognizing the significant developmental outcomes achieved in these early stages of life, RCAP's primary recommendations focus on: (1) extending early childhood services to all Aboriginal children regardless of residence; (2) encouraging programs that foster the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development of children, reducing distinctions between child care, prevention, and education; (3) maximizing Aboriginal control over service design and administration; (4) offering one-stop accessible funding; and (5) promoting parental involvement and choice in early childhood education options.

RCAP draws attention to the emergence of culturally-specific early childhood programs, with the report highlighting federal funded programs including the First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) and the Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern program (AHSUNC) as giving rise to strategic early interventions available to Aboriginal families and communities. In addition, early childhood programs that feature Indigenous languages as that basis of care and learning are part of the critical development of early learning programs in First Nations communities. With the onset of Aboriginal learning childhood programs grounded in cultural values, beliefs, and language at local levels, and consideration of the socio-economic realities and different educational starting points of Aboriginal children and

families, Aboriginal early childhood programs were began to take form in the early 1990's.

Indigenous early childhood development scholar, Margot Greenwood (2001, 2004, 2006) has written at length regarding the historical evolution of culturally specific Aboriginal early childhood education and care services in Canada suggesting in her analyses that Aboriginal child care programs differ from mainstream programs in their structure, and the ways young children's learning and growth is supported. She tells that the emergence of commitments to Aboriginal early childhood education in the early 1990's were driven by need for to support equity and employment for Aboriginal families. As research emerged that linked social interaction, stimulating learning environments, and quality care with brain development, the focus on children's overall well-being grounded arguments for early childhood in Aboriginal communities. As the field of Indigenous early childhood development and care continues to mature, Greenwood (2006) emphasizes the centrality of programs and policies coming from a place where Aboriginal ways of knowing and being form the basis of development and delivery. The focus of young Aboriginal children's identity, embedded in Indigenous knowledges, have resulted in "the refocusing and transformation of many existing programs and the establishment of additional programs and services" (p. 1) in on-reserve and off-reserve communities.

The following section is a description of Aboriginal-specific early childhood care and development programs at federal and provincial levels that respond to the recommendations of RCAP.

National Programs

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC)
Since 1995, the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) has been providing early intervention programming for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, ages 3 to 5 years, and their families living off-reserve. The program is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and currently supports nearly 4,800 children and their families at 133 AHSUNC project sites across the country (PHAC, 2016). A community AHSUNC program is supported by a sponsor, which can include a First Nations organization, host agency, non-profit organization, or educational authority.

The program is federally funded, yet locally delivered in order that other services directed at children and families can complement the program. This allows for family support workers, health services, or child welfare and other community programs to be integrated in to the AHS program. The program was developed in national consultation with Aboriginal families, communities, leaders, and organizations in urban and northern centers, resulting in six guiding program components: 1) Aboriginal culture and language; 2) education and school readiness;

3) health promotion; 4) nutrition; 5) social support; and 6) parental involvement. It operates three to four half-days per week, nine months per year.

An evaluation report of the program (AHSUNC, 2012) shows there has been immediate and positive impact on children's school readiness and cultural literacy. Program performance studies show children participating in the program have improved language, social, motor and academic skills. More specifically, children with prior participation in the program had significantly higher school readiness scores at the beginning of a school year than children new to the program of the same age. Further, though young children may begin the program with lower school readiness scores than a normative sample of age-matched peers, their scores at the end of the year are comparable or above those of the normative sample.

Data from the evaluation also revealed that the culture and language component of the program was key to fostering a positive sense of identity for children and families as it allowed for greater participation in cultural activities that included storytelling, songs, and traditional activities. Experiences with culture and language of children who participated in the program were compared to data from the Statistics Canada Aboriginal Children's Survey (2006), showing that AHSUNC participants see Aboriginal culture as more important to them and there was a significant increase in exposure to cultural activities. Given the significant impacts identified in the evaluation, there is need to consider longitudinal research that addresses children's long-term outcomes from their participation in the program.

Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve (AHSOR)
The Aboriginal Head Start program was extended to Aboriginal children and families living on-reserve in 1998, centered on the six program components of AHSUNC. The ASHOR intervention program is federally funded by First Nations and Inuit Health. It serves over 9000 children in over 300 First Nations communities across Canada (FNIH, 2010). Unique to the program is its locally-controlled delivery model options, that allow for center-based, outreach, or home-visiting versions of the program. Like the AHSUNC, this program promotes parents, families, and community members to deliver the program, as well as building relationships with other community programs and services so that children receive relevant and holistic supports.

An evaluation of AHSOR program surveyed 400 stakeholders from projects across Canada to assess the accomplishments of the program, roles and responsibilities of program stakeholders, and the strengths and limitations of the program in local settings. Responses came from parents, early childhood educators, administrators, and community members. Findings from this survey reveal that the majority of parents surveyed are satisfied with what the program is doing to support their child in the areas of social development, developing healthy eating habits, and fostering school readiness. Overall responses from the survey indicate that the majority of project sites focus on the Education component more than any other of the six

program components. What stands out from responses is that Kindergarten teachers reported that they see a difference in the children who have attended the Aboriginal Head Start program compared to Aboriginal children who do not attend the program. Teachers report children in the program have better basic skills, are more independent and confident, and have enhanced self-esteem. While the surveys identify challenges to the program, the report concludes that the program holds great promise for the development of children, families, and communities.

First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI)
In an effort to increase parental access to licensed child care, thereby ensuring parents can prepare for and take part in employment, education, and training, the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) was established in 1995 through funding by Human and Resources and Skills Development Canada. After 2011, FNICCI has been managed through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, which falls under the mandate of Employment and Social Development Canada. FNICCI creates child care spaces for Aboriginal children up to 6 years of age. Equally important to this initiative is the goal that children experience child care services that reflect their values, beliefs, cultures, and languages.

In their analysis of federally funded child care initiatives, the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS, 2014) suggest that an increase in the Aboriginal population, new employment and training opportunities, as well as a desire for culturally-based early childhood programming has led to an increase demand for child care spaces in Aboriginal communities. Funding has not kept up with the demand and an estimated 50% more child care spaces are needed to meet requests for the FNICCI program. A review of 8 selected Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements (AHRDA's) that include a FNICCI reveals daycare centers funded through this initiative have had an impact on children's development and the local economy by enabling parent to pursue employment and training. Key informants and parents identify specific successes that include positive socialization, the development of self-confidence, and focus on the health and nutritional needs of Aboriginal children (HRSDC, 2009). Assessing the impact of the FNICCI on Inuit regions, a report by the Inuit Tapiriit Kunatimi (2014) note that "guaranteeing the right of Inuit children to child care grounded in the language, culture, values, and traditions of their families and communities requires a funding framework, indexed to the rising cost of living, that encourages, sustains and supports Inuit ownership of early childhood development programs" (p. 23).

Provincial Initiative Examples

Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP)
Supporting Aboriginal families and children in British Columbia, who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with developmental delays, the AIDP provides home visits, appropriate activities, and assessments that are culturally sensitive and relevant to families. Established in 2002, the program responds to the need for culturally-based

programs. The program is voluntary, family centered, and centered on children ages birth to three years. Consultants assist families to access other health, social, and community services. The need for AIDP services is steadily increasing as Aboriginal communities establish comprehensive child care services. There are 29 AIDP's operating in BC. Fourteen of these programs were surveyed and reported to be serving over 400 infants and their families. There is a Provincial Advisor for the program, who is the point of contact and provides expert advice, consultation, support, information, resource, coordination and leadership for this growing program. In addition, the advisor works with consultants to raise awareness and build capacity, strengthen partnerships and program and policy development.

BCACCS (2014) contends that AIDP is unevenly available across the province, with smaller and more remote communities having limited access to these services in comparison to larger urban centers or First Nations programs that have greater capacity for resources and services.

Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG)
The Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group (IECDWG) shares a vision for the future of Inuit children, which is for happy, healthy and safe Inuit children and families. Currently, the group is a sub-committee of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) health committee. Its members come from the regional Inuit organizations which are signatories of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements, now called the Aboriginal Skills Education Training Strategy (ASETS). The regions are: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, Kitikmeot and Inuvialuit. Other representatives identified in the terms of reference include one representative from Pauktuutit and another from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which is the secretariat for the group. The IECDWG has been meeting formally each year, since 2004, when an Inuit Early Childhood Development Strategy was finalized. This strategy which is reviewed and updated annually provides a vision, principles, and goals for Inuit ECD (ITK 2004; 2006).

Early Immersion in Aboriginal Early Childhood
With the onset of Aboriginal early childhood programs grounded in the cultural beliefs, values, cultures, and languages of local Aboriginal communities, emphasis on Indigenous language preservation, revitalization, and use has become a priority. Like the 'language nest' programs in Native Hawaiian communities in the United States, as well as Maori communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, early childhood programs in Canada have established learning settings where young children are immersed in culture and language of the community.

RCAP highlighted the Splats'in Daycare in BC as an example of how Aboriginal languages in early childhood programs give these programs a distinctly Aboriginal character. Since then, early immersion programs have expanded across Canada. Some successful early immersion programs include the Kihew Waciston Cree Immersion School in Onion Lake, Saskatchewan, the multiple classes of kindergarten at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation , the Nhiyawak Cree Immersion

Kindergarten at St. Frances School in Saskatoon, the Eskasoni Mi'kmaq Immersion program, and the Cseyseten language nest at Adam's Lake, BC.

Research concerning Aboriginal children's participation in early immersion programming underscores language learning's contribution to Indigenous identity, well being, and academic achievement (Assembly of First Nations Chief, 2005; Ball and Pence, 2005; McIvor, 2006). McIvor reminds us that language is one of the most tangible symbols of a young Aboriginal child's identity. Further, Francis and Reyhner (2002) tell us that cultural and identity affirmation occurs through language learning. "Without the language of one's ancestors, individual and collective identity gets weakened and it is likely that the culture would die out within a few generations" (McIvor, 2006, p. 6).

There is a growing body of literature that demonstrates children's cognitive abilities are enhanced when they learn an additional language. For example, Aguilera (2007) examined the history and implementation of language instruction for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children in three different language communities. Findings from the study indicate that in all three case studies Native American-speaking students performed well on the achievement tests, which were given in English even as they were taught through Indigenous language instruction. "Students who have a strong sense of their own ethnic identity do better in school than those who don't. Schools which reinforce positive ethnic identification for students will produce students with higher achievements" (p. 3).

Discussion

Systemic Actions: Successes and Challenges

There have been strong collaborative efforts on the part of Indigenous families, communities, governments, and leaders to realize the recommendations of RCAP in relationship to Aboriginal early childhood education. What stands out in response to the RCAP recommendations is the emphasis of Aboriginal-specific early childhood education and development programs that have emerged in the past few decades to nurture the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development of young Aboriginal children. Research underscores the benefits to identity, well-being and achievement when Indigenous knowledge systems are at the heart of learning. Further, programs and services that promote Indigenous cultures and languages play a role in Indigenous self-determination and autonomy.

Canada's Aboriginal Head Start programs (AHSOR and AHSUNC) are proven examples of the positive impact culturally-based early childhood programs have on the linguistic and cultural restoration of Indigenous communities. While these two programs are federally funded, they are locally delivered and therefore offer opportunities to engage local knowledge holders, community members, and families in ensuring culture and language permeate program dimensions. Among the six foundational principles of AHS is culture and language. For the much younger Aboriginal childhood movement in Canada, local AHS project sites provide hope and

promise that program and center-based early childhood services are essential to the larger picture of Indigenous resurgence for families and communities. As Ball (2014) states, "ASH is the most extensive, innovative, and culturally based early childhood development initiative for Aboriginal preschool children and families in Canada. AHS has led the growth of capacity in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people to deliver culturally based ECCE in their communities" (p. 13).

Another positive development in response to RCAP recommendations has been the shift to maximize control over service design and administration of Aboriginal-early learning programming. As an exemplar, authority of health programs in BC, which includes early childhood development services for First Nations children living on-reserve, has been transferred to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). A *Tripartite Agreement on First Nations Health Governance* gives responsibility to the FNHA authority to plan, design, manage, delivery and fund programs previously administered by the First Nations Health Branch and Health Canada. This unique agreement brings together BC First Nations, the federal government, and the provincial government to give communities greater control to deliver a broad range of early childhood and development services that meet locally defined needs. Programs that will be managed under this agreement include AHSOR, Maternal and Child Health, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and the Prenatal Nutrition Programs previously organized under Early Childhood Development by the federal government. The flexibility to decide on local ECD priorities means that the "FNHA expects that the transfer will ensure more culturally enriched ECD program and greatly improve the health and well-being of First Nations children, families, and communities in BC" (BCACCS, 2014, p. 46).

While these successful examples demonstrate how recommendations of RCAP have been attended to, there still remains challenges to advancing Indigenous early childhood education and policy that reflect RCAP goals. Challenges identified include:

Professional learning: The paucity of Aboriginal early childhood educators presents a major challenge for Aboriginal communities and programs (Greenwood et al., 2007). Reports suggest that the shortage of qualified Aboriginal early childhood teachers is due to stringent early childhood licensing requirements, high costs of developing and delivering local training programs, and the vast distances between post-secondary institutes and Aboriginal communities that require potential educators to relocate from their family and communities (BCACCS, 2012; Preston, et al., 2012). In addition, those seeking admission to programs may not have the formal academic requirements needed for acceptance into training programs.

The IECDWG (2010) identified the training needs of early childhood educators working in regions in north. Their recommendations focus on the need for increased funding to support professional learning, training specific to Inuit language learning, and creating greater opportunities for knowledge exchange. Focus on specific-training topics relevant to the BC early childhood context include special needs,

effective communication, addressing the legacy of residential schools, and management skills (BC ACCS, 2012). Ball (2014) points out the need for "federal investment in professional education to substantially increase the skilled Aboriginal labour force for operating programs for young Aboriginal children and families, including early childhood education is long over due and could work to overcome the challenges of staff recruitment, retention, and on-going improvement" (p. 2).

Decline of federal interest in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development: In their scan and analysis of Aboriginal early childhood development programs, BCACCS (2014) assert that federal interest in early 2000's in closing the gap in life chances between Aboriginal children and other children in Canada through early childhood development programs and services has receded. Their report points to numerous changes in policy directions that directly impact on funding to Aboriginal early childhood education, including the shelving of the Kelowna Accord, the delay to accept the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples, and the changes by the current Liberal government to replace plans for a national childcare program with the Universal Child Care Benefit that gives families $100 per month to off set childcare expenses for children under six years. Another report by the Public Policy Forum (2014) describes the flurry of programs and services established between 1995 and 2005, noting that following this time frame there has been few developments in Aboriginal early childhood at the federal level.

Ball (2014) recommends a mechanism for monitoring the extent to which Canada is honouring its commitments to Aboriginal children. She draws attention to a legal framework and an independent national children's commission as a means to monitor conditions for Aboriginal children, including federal, provincial, and territorial commitments and policies that affect children, and bring legal action where necessary.

Commitments to long-term funding: Reports concerning Aboriginal early childhood education and development make consistent calls for increased and sustained funding that will allow for organizations and communities to develop their own capacity and culturally appropriate early learning models (Ball & Moselle, 2013; BCACCS, 2014; Nguyen, 2011, Preston et al., 2012; Public Policy Forum, 2014). In seeking to promote a dialogue on Indigenous early childhood development and identify opportunities to expand existing program and services, the Public Policy Forum (2014) recommends a comprehensive analysis of funding levels in non-Indigenous communities compared to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. This is because there are significant funding disparities in the per capita funding levels for similar programs that target different population groups. The report gives the example of per capita funding for child care services administered by provincial governments increasing, while funding for AHSOR has slowed.

Access to and coordination of early childhood development programs and services: Despite the emergence two decades ago of federally funded programs, such as AHS, FNICCI, and others, as well as many innovative provincial and local programs, there

is an urgent need to increase accessibility to Aboriginal early childhood education program for children and families. The First Nations Regional Health Survey (2012) finds that only a third of children living on-reserve attend a formalized child care program. In urban and northern communities, there is a growing demand for culturally relevant early childhood services. This has led to an annual average of 1300 Aboriginal children on waiting list to attend AHSUNC programs (PHF, 2014). As the demand for locally developed services grows, specific services for young Métis children and families are rare (Métis Nation Council, 2014).

There is a growing body of research that the supports the goals of RCAP to ensure parental involvement and choice in early childhood education options and that ECD be extended to all Aboriginal children regardless of residence through coordinated and integrated services. Programs that serve as focal points for coordinating access to other community services for families enable early identification of social, educational, and health challenges and promotes social inclusion for families that might otherwise be isolated (Ball, 2012; 2014). This form of coordination can be observed in AHS programs that link families to a range of other services in the community.

Lessons Learned
The following systematic actions could be considered positive achievements regarding the major RCAP recommendations that were noted at the beginning of this section about early childhood education:
- Holistic services that emphasize social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development have positive outcomes associated with identity, well-being, and academic achievement.
- Control of and parental involvement in Aboriginal early learning services contributes to culturally-relevant programs that are flexible and responsive to family and community needs.

On-going challenges related to Indigenizing education that could become future core policy issues:
- There is a growing need for qualified Aboriginal early childhood education who require professional learning opportunities.
- The growing Aboriginal population of young children and young families underscores the need to increase funding and access to quality Aboriginal early childhood education.
- The need for coordinated and integrated services
- Long-term evaluation of programs that are under federal, provincial, and First Nations jurisdiction

Indigenizing K-12 Education

A scan of K-12 provincial Ministry of Education web sites and some national educational organizations was completed in response to the question about breakthroughs, positive achievements, innovative ideas, barriers and neglected issues across Canada. The professional knowledge and experiences of the authors supplemented this analysis. Criteria for determining the achievements and issues that will be positioned in the Discussion section were based on RCAP's major educational recommendations that included: (1) ensuring education is recognized as a critical component of Aboriginal self-government; (2) enacting aspects of Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education; (3) culture-based curriculum and programs; (4) priority for Aboriginal languages; (5) system-wide approaches such as school board strategy; (6) youth empowerment; and (7) establishing community high school programs in rural and remote areas (Chapter 5: Education, 1996, pp 444-487).

Provincial Ministries of Education

British Columbia (BC)

The BC Ministry of Education (Ministry) has undertaken the task of self-identification of Aboriginal students attending public schools so that their academic progress can be tracked throughout their schooling and into post-secondary education[1]. The Ministry has reported on the results each year from 2003, although their web site shows a five-year span of data. In addition, each school district (of 60) is required to develop and implement a five-year Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) that is in partnership with Aboriginal people/communities. The AEEA sets improvement goals and targets and carries out strategies for Aboriginal student success. School Boards are expected to report annually on the progress of the AEEA. No data is shown about the numbers of Aboriginal teachers working in the school districts.

Kitchenham, Fraser, Pidgeon, & Ragoonaden (2016) conducted research on how Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements have helped improve Aboriginal education and what improvements were needed for these agreements. This research was conducted for the BC Ministry of Education. The results of 22 school districts' participation indicated the following findings: trust and relationship building are essential; academic success is achieved through Indigenous inclusion; and cultural alliances are beneficial. The recommendations call for the Ministry of Education and School Boards to increase professional development for all staff in schools; increase knowledge and information about the AEEA throughout the school district, in particular how the AEEA relates to the work of staff and connects to the

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[1] Each student attending K-12 public schools is given a Personal Education Number

Ministry of Education's goals; and continue to build and strengthen community relationships with the school districts[2].

In 2015-16, the BC Ministry of Education completed a K-9 curriculum redesign that has Aboriginal perspectives and resources embedded in each subject area and each grade level from kindergarten to grade nine. The grades 10-12 graduation program is still in development stages but there are hopes that Aboriginal perspectives will be included in these grades as well. Already, there are provincial high school Aboriginal courses or resources for Math 8,9; English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12; and BC First Nations Studies 12. Other provincial resources include the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* that have guided the K-9 curriculum redesign and used widely throughout the educational system and an *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom* teaching resource. The aforementioned curriculum resources were led by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) that worked with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators in the development and implementation phases. The next section highlights FNESC as an Indigenous organization that is not a unit of the provincial government, but works with the BC Ministry of Education in jurisdictional and other education policy matters.

BC- First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA)

The First Nations Education Steering Committee was formed in 1992 to provide quality education for all First Nations K-12 learners in British Columbia. FNESC is an Indigenous led and controlled provincial organization that engages in research, policy and curriculum development, developing partnerships, advocacy, and works with the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA). FNESC has a membership of approximately 100 communities. FNSA was formally established in 1996 to also support quality education for First Nations students and the development of culturally-based curricula and programs. It has a membership of 128 BC First Nations schools[3].

One important jurisdictional undertaking of FNESC was the development of the First Nations Jurisdiction over Education in British Columbia Act (Bill C 34, 2006) that enables specific First Nations to have control over on-reserve K-12 education. The BC Act included agreements with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the federal government, and the BC provincial government. In 2006 the legislation with the federal government was passed and in 2007 it was passed in BC. The First Nations Education Steering Committee has made some progress with the provincial government regarding reciprocal tuition where the Ministry of Education provides per student funding for First Nations students living off-reserve and attending First

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[2] See *Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements: Complicated Conversations as Pathways to Success*
https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/research/AEEA-Final_Report_June_2016.pdf
[3] See http://www.fnesc.ca

Nations schools and for non-status students living on reserve. FNESC has been more involved in the Ministry of Education's policy matters. The negotiations with the federal government regarding funding have stalled movement with implementing this act.

As mentioned above, FNESC has led the development of Indigenous curricula. One recent resource not included earlier is the *Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guides* for grades 5, 10, and 11/12 that was in response to the TRC call to action to develop age appropriate curriculum about these schools and their impact for use in public education (and other systems). These resources were developed by a team of educators and piloted in 30 schools before final publication. Suggestions for dealing sensitively with the topic of residential schools are also included[4].

Alberta

Alberta's Ministry of Education First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Policy Framework was established in 2002. The 2016-19 Business Plan for Education indicates that currently the high school completion of non-Aboriginal students (5 years after grade 10) is 82% and the target rises from 82.7 to 83.3% by 2018-19. For Aboriginal students the target was 53.2% in 2013-14 and moves to 55% in 2016-17; 56.5% in 2017-18; and 59% in 2018-19. One wonders why not a higher rate of improvement? In 2014 the Government of Alberta released an "Expression of Reconciliation for the Legacy of the Indian Residential School System" document that indicates having all K-12 learn about Aboriginal history and culture and ensuring all educators get more professional development. A new Assistant Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Learning was to be established. The progress on these strategies is not yet evident from this ministry's web site.

Saskatchewan

A Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes was created by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Saskatchewan provincial government in 2012. This task force released a comprehensive report in 2013 (early learning, K-12, post-secondary, and employment) based on extensive consultations with First Nations and Métis people, a review of literature, and conducting research themselves: *Voice, Vision, and Leadership: A Place for All.* Some examples of Aboriginal programs that were subsequently developed include: early math and language skills assessment, partnerships between the provincial educational system and First Nations educational organizations to support students living on-reserve.

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[4] See http://www.fnesc.ca/about-the-project/

Manitoba

Manitoba's Ministry of Education notes a Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes (for teaching Aboriginal languages). There are a variety of curriculum resources from K-12 published in 1995-98.

Ontario

Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy (first released in 2007 as the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Policy Framework, FNMI) has three major goals: (1) to improve FNMI student achievement and well-being; (2) to close the achievement gap between Indigenous and all students; and (3) to increase public confidence in publicly funded education. Major strategies include: a Board Action Plan that is quite structured but has funding attached; Aboriginal curriculum resources and teacher professional development. This Ministry has reported every few years on progress of its Strategy with the last report in 2013. Much of the work to data was to get the public school system ready for systemic change. The Ontario Ministry of Education introduced a process of voluntary self-identification of Aboriginal students in (year). Comparing the Stats Canada data on Aboriginal student numbers, Ontario appears to have 2/3 self-identification (get figures). No data is shown about the numbers of Aboriginal people working within the public schools.

Nova Scotia

In 1997, the Mik'maq Education Act was signed as an agreement and became a law in 1999 between the federal government and the Mi'kmaq Bands in Nova Scotia with respect to education. Communities may make laws for k-12 and post-secondary education and provide services and programs. The Mi'kmaw-Kina'matnewey Education Authority (MK) was established as a corporation under this act to support and deliver the act's services for 12 Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. The MK collects data on their students and works with universities on teacher education and master's degree program. The following high school graduation rates for Mi'kmaw students were reported: 2010-11, 75%; 2012-13, 88%; 2013-14, 92%[5] (Simon, 2014).

Pillar Two of "Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education 2015. The 3 Rs: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild" includes "language, history, and culture of Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Mi'kmaq, including Treaty Education, in the grades primary to 12 curriculum." There is an entrepreneurship emphasis to the action plan (i.e., establish Business-Education Council and include Entrepreneurship Education) and more priority is placed on math throughout the grades with math mentors in the early years. A teacher recruitment campaign is recommended to attract Acadian,

[5] Simon, L. (2014). Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey Supporting Student Success. Ontario: Inspire

African, Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq teachers. A recommendation is made to revamp teacher education[6].

Nunavut
In 2000, the then new Nunavut government created an approach for a "made-in-Nunavut educational system embedded in Inuit culture."[7] In 2007-08, three foundational documents were published that focussed on Ilitaunnikuliriniq assessment, Inuglugijaittuq inclusive education and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Nunavut curriculum. Besides Nunavut curriculum, some of the approved curriculum has been adapted from the NWT, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Of note is the "Elders In Schools" program that is mandated in Nunavut's Education Act. In 2012-13, 94 certified Elders were teaching language and culture (traditional land-based, environmental knowledge and navigation skills). The foundations of the 2008 Education Act includes Inuit values, Inuit language and bilingual education, inclusive education, and local control by District Education Authorities. The last report was for 2012-13. The high school graduation rate was noted at 32.2%. The previous four years indicates a range around 37%.

Northwest Territories (NWT)
Over 50% of NWT students are Aboriginal. In response to the 2010 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories, an Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan 2011-21 was developed. It is a comprehensive strategy that includes a multi-pronged approach to language and culture curriculum and programming, including Aboriginal language teacher education learning experiences. The NWT also developed an Action Plan, 2014-17 that includes commitments, areas for action, rationale, and three-year deliverables. The action plan is holistic and includes community/school relationships, student academic learning and sense of identity, professional knowledge and training for teachers, and accountability measures[8]. In addition, a *Residential Schools Education*, grade 10 teaching resource became mandatory in 2012 for grade 10 Northern Studies in NWT and Social Studies in Nunavut.

Yukon
The Government of Yukon has established the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit (FNPP) that builds relationships with First Nations communities, works to increase FN perspectives in schools and to increase the K-12 FN students

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[6]

https://www.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/docs/educationactionplan2015en.pdf

[7]

http://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/Inclusive%20Education%20ENG.pdf

[8] See NWT Department of Education, Culture & Employment
https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/education_renewal_action_plan.pdf

academic progress, and to enhance FN language revitalization. This unit has completed educational agreements with various FN communities in the Yukon. However, no specific information is included on its web site.

The Role of National Organizations

Canadian Council on Learning (CCL)
 The CCL was established in 2004 by the federal government and given an $85 million grant to engage in research and report on lifelong learning in Canada. It operated for six years before its dissolution by the federal government in 2010. One important unit of the CCL was the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre carried out in partnership between the University of Saskatchewan and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium. A number of innovative research studies were undertaken and publications that report on Aboriginal learning at local, provincial, and national sites were published that included the following: (1) 2007 *Redefining How Success Is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning* that was developed in collaboration with various Aboriginal organizations. This report addressed the means by which Aboriginal learners could be assessed. *(2) 2009 State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Success.* A Holistic Lifelong Learning Measurement Framework was developed, which was the first of its kind in Canada. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Models were developed by these three groups and the models establish a baseline of some indicators such as lifelong educational levels, sources and domains of knowledge and community well-being. The aforementioned publications are currently available online, but the CCL web site is no longer functional. The many other Aboriginal learning reports there were on the original CCL web site do not seem to be available.

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE)
ACDE has a membership of 63 deans, directors and chairs of education at Canadian universities and university-colleges. ACDE is "committed to pan-Canadian leadership in professional and teacher education, educational research, and policy."[9] One project has been the development of national Accords, the Accord on Indigenous Education (2010) is a prime example. This accord sets out a vision, principles, and goals that its signatories may use to guide their programs, evaluation, and research. ACDE encourages its members to share their progress, challenges, and successes in implementing this Accord. Examples of goals include culturally responsive pedagogy, curricula, and assessment; promoting Indigeneity within the Faculty's programs; affirming and revitalizing Indigenous languages; and ensuring non-Indigenous students critically examine their own positioning and perspectives, as well as having authentic Indigenous education learning experiences. A progress report about the Indigenous Education Accord was published in 2011. One other national project, an annual Indigenous teacher education symposium will be discussed in the post-secondary section.

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[9] http://www.csse-scee.ca/acde/about

Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)
The CMEC made Aboriginal education one of its priorities in 2004. In the past decade the CMEC has sponsored national conferences, established a best practices data base, worked in partnership with the Canadian Education Statistics Council to define, collect, and share Aboriginal education data, cooperated with faculties of education and others to increase the numbers of Aboriginal teacher candidates and include Aboriginal culture and history in teacher education programs, and has worked with the federal government on areas of mutual concern and interest. The CMEC has developed a new Aboriginal Education Plan 2015-17 that emphasizes the professional development of Aboriginal future teachers and development or support for curriculum resources on the Indian Residential Schools.

Indspire
Indspire is a national Indigenous led registered charity that serves First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students through partnerships with Indigenous, private and public sectors. Known for celebrating the achievements of Indigenous people through its awards, Indspire also awarded in 2015-16, 12.2 million, in scholarships to 3,792 Indigenous students across Canada (Jamieson, 2016)[10]. Indspire projects also include: a K-12 Institute which is a virtual educational resource centre, national conferences, research assistance to schools and communities, student career programs and activities.

Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative
The Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative "seeks to improve elementary and secondary school education outcomes for Aboriginal Canadians through the implementation of specific programs and the application of appropriate research."[11] Some projects include the *Promising Practices in Aboriginal Education (PPW)* established in 2009 that include K-12 curriculum resources and practices, policies and research, and other topics such as parent/community engagement and early childhood education. Other projects include an Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Project, the Accounting Mentoring Project, a Banking Mentorship Project, and a Model Schools Program (based on research).

Discussion

Systemic Actions: Successes and Challenges

RCAP's recommendation that emphasizes Aboriginal parental involvement and local control through legislation and school policies has been taken up across the country;

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[10] Jamieson, R. (2016 September). A Call for Quality Education. *Policy: Canadian Politics and Public Policy,* 4(5), 44-46. *http://www.policymagazine.ca/pdf/21/PolicyMagazineSeptemberOctober-2016-Jamieson.pdf*
[11] http://www.maei-ieam.ca/about.html

although the quality and impact of such engagement is not consistently reported in publicly accessible documents on provincial and territorial web sites. Since the release of RCAP, provincial Ministries of Education have developed Aboriginal education province-wide strategies that include policy frameworks, action plans, and agreements. Only two provinces have entered into legislative actions: Nova Scotia and British Columbia. The three territorial governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut have their own educational acts that address Aboriginal education.

Two exemplars of provincial-federal-First Nations legislation mentioned above were the Mi'kmaq Education Act in Nova Scotia and the BC First Nations Jurisdiction over Education Act. The former has demonstrated substantial Mi'kmaq academic success while the latter has not yet been realized due to funding issues. The Mi'kmaq is a much smaller homogenous context compared to the larger and diverse context of BC. However, the progress on realizing local control through legislation continues to be a pressing and long-standing issue.

Another RCAP recommendation related to the one above is a school board comprehensive Aboriginal education strategy developed with Aboriginal people to include hiring Aboriginal teachers; creating Aboriginal admin/leadership positions, counselors/liaison workers/speech therapists); developing Aboriginal curriculum; increasing Elder involvement; implementing Aboriginal language classes; including family/community involvement mechanisms; and reducing stereotypes/racism. Two exemplars that have taken up this recommendation include British Columbia and Ontario.

British Columbia's school district Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements and Local Education Agreements and Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy appear to have consistent but small growth patterns when there is a vibrant relationship between Aboriginal people (families, communities, organizations) and school/district staff and leadership. Improvement goals or targets are set that often include reducing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students; however, other important success goals reflect more of a holistic approach such as a sense of belonging (emotional), student empowerment/leadership (physical), appreciation and knowledge of Indigenous culture and history (social/emotional, spiritual, intellectual). Additional funding is attached to both provincial strategies. These provinces appear to be the only ones that carry out identification of Aboriginal students for tracking their academic progress and reporting publicly on aggregate data with BC having a longer and more comprehensive reporting process.[12]

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[12] See the annual "How Are We Doing Report?"
https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/performance.htm

Another RCAP recommendation that has a systemic action implication is the development of innovative curricula that reflect Aboriginal cultures and community realities. This recommendation has been taken up across Canada at local levels, especially, where public, independent, and First Nations schools have worked with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit family and community members to develop curricula, programs, and services that are based on local Indigenous knowledges. Some of these resources are province-wide as well, recommended for use in public schools. District, Ministries of Education and other national association web sites include information and web links to these numerous teaching/learning resources. Indspire and the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative continue to add curricular and other educational resources to their web sites. Indspire has also established a K-12 Institute as a digital interactive resource for educators.

The teaching resources are at all grade levels and all subject areas, including math and science. The latter (culturally responsive math and science) was only being introduced 20 years ago. Today Indigenous knowledge or culturally responsive approaches to teaching math, science, and all other subjects are evident, although their quality and impact needs to be address through research. What is not evident is the uptake of this innovative curricula. Ministries of Education indicate that Aboriginal content and perspectives will be integrated more into the provincial curriculum; however, the only province that does this inclusion is British Columbia, and then only recently, in 2015-16. The BC Aboriginal Education Partners' Group have begun to advocate for an Aboriginal course to be taken as a high school graduation requirement. The ongoing challenge of meaning implementation throughout the school system remains for Aboriginal curriculum.

Another ongoing challenge that has not been given sufficient attention and action is the recommendation that Aboriginal language education be a priority in all educational systems. Except for the territorial governments and Nova Scotia through the Mi'kmaw Education Act, Aboriginal language education does not appear to be a priority in all educational systems, nor has it received as much attention or support as Indigenous knowledge-based curricula.

Lessons Learned

The following systemic actions could be considered positive achievements regarding the major RCAP recommendations that were noted at the beginning of this section about K-12 education:
- relationship building between Aboriginal people/organizations and public school system and First Nationss schools;
- meaningful decision-making engagement of Aboriginal people in policy, programs, and evaluation;
- establishing system-wide strategy with goals, targets, strategies, and assessment;

- self-identification of Aboriginal students in order to have baseline data for comparison;
- appointing Aboriginal teachers/principals/district-wide;
- providing on-going professional development for all teachers in working with Aboriginal learners and teaching Aboriginal content/approaches;
- curricular innovation; and
- reporting on progress.

The ongoing challenges related to Indigenizing K-12 education could become future core policy issues:
- Legislation and implementing self governance in education that also includes urban Aboriginal people;
- Insufficient funding;
- Systemic change to make Aboriginal knowledge and history a mandatory learning requirement; and
- Addressing Aboriginal language education more fully.

In response to the question about who are the drivers of change, it is evident that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people are the major drivers of change at local, national, and international levels. The various provincial and national strategies have had many Indigenous people working together with non-Indigenous educators and government staff. When an organization is formally established and recognized to serve their constituent groups, such as the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Mi'kmaw-Kina'matnewey Education Authority, and the Canadian Deans of Education, then they are recognized as having authority and responsibility to carry out their respective mandates. One ongoing challenge is how urban Aboriginal people can constitute their own self-governing group, especially at public school district levels.

Indigenizing Post-secondary Education

Teacher Education Recommendations
One set of very important change makers for K-12 education are teachers and other school/district leaders such as principals and directors of instruction. RCAP made a number or recommendations related to preparing effective teachers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal: (1) Expand and fund existing Aboriginal teacher education programs contingent on evidence of Aboriginal support for the program, involvement in program governance, use of Aboriginal content and pedagogy, and periodic evaluations; (2) Increase Aboriginal secondary school teachers; (3) Expand the numbers of Aboriginal people through teacher education programs and career laddering opportunities delivered directly in communities and ensure students in each province and territory have access to such programs; (4) Include course(s) about Aboriginal education for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal education students (Chapter 5: Education, 1996, pp. 490-500). The achievements, innovations,

and challenges related to these recommendations are drawn from an environmental scan of teacher education programs across Canada, a review of the literature, and the authors' teacher education experiences and knowledge. Both have worked specifically in Indigenous teacher education and generally in teacher education for 13-35 years. However, the emphasis will be on the time period since the release of the RCAP report in 1996.

An Overview of Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs

In 1996, RCAP indicated that there were 34 Aboriginal teacher education programs across Canada and that there were approximately 8,075 Aboriginal teachers; although those numbers also included paraprofessionals. The actual numbers of certified Aboriginal teachers was not given and still seems to be unknown. This is one area of data collection that is still not undertaken. RCAP estimated that "[a]t least three times as many are needed to achieve parity with the number of non-Aboriginal teachers serving non-Aboriginal children" (1996, p. 491). If data are not collected and reported on, then it is difficult to know the level of progress and the hindrances to increasing the numbers of Aboriginal teachers. National organizations have identified increasing the numbers of Aboriginal teachers as a priority such as the Council of Ministers of Education Canada and Canadian Association of Deans of Education.

A set of Indigenous teacher education programs that were established in the 1960s – 1980s were mentioned in the RCAP 1996 report. A number of these are still offering their programs such as NITEP (Native Indian Teacher Education Program) at UBC; McGill offers community-based programs throughout Quebec in partnership with First Nations and Inuit; NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program) Saskatchewan; and SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program) at University of Saskatchewan (pp. 495-96). A scan of Faculty of Education teacher education programs across Canada was completed. It is difficult to understand how RCAP identified 34 Indigenous teacher education programs in its 1996 report. In 2016, 19 Indigenous teacher education programs were identified that culminated in a Bachelor of Education degree. Either a number of these programs have been discontinued, or the definition of teacher education programs may have included laddering and access options, which the 2016 scan did not include.

Each province or region has at least one Indigenous teacher education program that includes preparation for elementary, middle, and high school teaching. The programs have many Indigenous education courses that could constitute a specialization in this area and many are community-based or offer some part of the program at community sites. The range of courses includes Aboriginal history, Indigenous knowledge, math/science and Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal curriculum and pedagogy, and Indigenous languages.

Aboriginal languages are beginning to have a more central place in Bachelor of Education degree programs with some having laddering opportunities. Some examples include:

- University of Victoria's Aboriginal Language Revitalization Bachelor Degree program and laddering certification that culminates in a Bachelor of Education degree Interestingly, the University of Victoria also offers a Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization (MILR), which is the only one of its kind in Canada. It offers the program in a cohort structure and currently has cohorts in BC and one in Saskatchewan[13]
- Lakehead University's B.Ed in Aboriginal Education and Native Language Insructors' Program/Specialization in Native Language
- Joint Aboriginal Language Specialist/B.Ed degree with Red River College and the University of Winnipeg
- Nipissing University's Diploma in Anishnaabemwin as a Second Language Program

Two innovative teacher education degree programs that are offered as a partnership between different post-secondary institutions are with the University of Winnipeg: (1) a joint venture between the Manitoba government, University of Winnipeg, and school diversions to offer the Community-Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) to acquire a BA/Bed degree for Aboriginal people working as teaching assistants; and (2) the joint program in Aboriginal Language Teacher Education with the Red River College in Manitoba.

Learning from scholarship about Aboriginal education courses in teacher education

RCAP recommended that Aboriginal education courses in teacher education be included for all teacher education learners. The Indigenous teacher education programs have many such courses that constitute an Indigenous education specialization. In the last five years, teacher education programs have responded to national and provincial policy that calls for compulsory instruction in Aboriginal education for their pre-service teachers. The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) expressed its commitment to increasing future teachers' knowledge about and understanding of Indigenous education in its Accord on Indigenous Education (Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010), The recently released report from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) has a series of recommendations, among its 94 calls to action, that call on post-secondary institutions to require all students in the fields of nursing, medicine, legal studies, social work, and education to take courses dealing with Aboriginal history; the legacy of residential schools; Aboriginal rights; and Indigenous teachings, practices, and worldview. Professional

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[13] See https://www.uvic.ca/education/assets/docs/IED%20Summer%202016%20Newsletter.pdf

provincial certification bodies such as the BC Teacher Regulation Branch, in 2012, required that teacher candidates had to complete an Aboriginal course or equivalent learning experiences in order to be granted professional certification.

Teacher educators have started to write about their experiences teaching pre-service teachers in course work that attends to Indigenous education. This growing body of literature highlights, in general, two very specific topics: (1) teacher candidate responses to Indigenous education coursework from the perspectives of teacher educators (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Deer, 2013; den Heyer, 2009; Dion, 2007; Kanu, 2005; Kerr & Parent, 2015; Kitchen & Raynor, 2013; Tanaka, Williams, Benoit, Duggan, Moir, & Scarrow, 2007; Tompkins, 2002; Tupper, 2011); and (2) pedagogical approaches that teacher educators use in their teaching of Indigenous education course work (Belczewski, 2009; Cannon, 2012; Chambers, 2006; Hare, 2015; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Kerr, 2014; Nicol & Korteweg, 2010; Oberg, Blades, & Thom, 2007; Schneider, 2015; Scully, 2012 & 2015; Wolf, 2012). Recently, the national *Canadian Journal of Native Education* devoted its 2015 theme issue to *Indigenous Teacher Education and Teacher Education for Indigenous Education* (Archibald & Steinhauer, Eds). This section will highlight key points of the literature identified above.

Teacher education has drawn on a range of approaches to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing, including multicultural and anti-racism education, along with advancing Indigenous perspectives, content, and pedagogies through the different but related theoretical strands and practices of critical race theory, culturally responsive pedagogies, and course work dedicated specifically to Indigenous education (Sleeter, 2011; St. Denis, 2007). There is a growing body of literature advocating pre-service teachers' learning through engaging with Indigenous theories and practices and from Indigenous educators, knowledge keepers, and communities (Archibald, 2008; Cherubini, 2008; Kitchen & Raynor, 2013; Phillips, 2011; Sanford et al., 2012). For example, Williams and Tanaka (2007) describe their development of a course for pre-service teachers which is grounded in Indigenous principles of mentorship and community engagement, and which uses pedagogies of experiential learning, storytelling, and community service. Student reflections from this course revealed deep transformations in social understandings whereby emerging teachers released their personal and long-held beliefs of teaching and learning to consider pedagogies much different from what teacher education tends to promote.

In another study, Kitchen and Raynor (2013) engaged nine teacher candidates in a course concerned with Indigenizing teaching and learning whereby students took part in activities that reflected experiential orientations within Indigenous pedagogies. This included taking part in ceremonial practices, sharing circles, modelling, storytelling, and learning from Indigenous Elders and community members. Responses from teacher candidates in their journals and interviews suggest that these students made a significant movement towards understanding, articulating, and implementing Indigenous pedagogy. Studies such as these form the

core of research that focuses on teacher educators' perceptions of the experiences of pre-service teachers.

Research that reveals Indigenous perspectives and practices recommended for pre-service teacher training raises the question: *What knowledge and experiences with Indigenous knowledge systems, ways of knowing, and pedagogies do instructors bring to the classroom?* Literature suggests that Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty experience the teaching of Indigenous content, perspectives, and pedagogies in higher education differently. Non-Indigenous faculty may feel unprepared or lack confidence to engage in conversations on Indigenous issues in the classroom (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013). Kovach, Carriere, Montgomery, Barrett, and Gilles (2015) examine the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors teaching in the disciplines of social work and education, describing an "outside-in dynamic" experienced by non-Indigenous instructors who feel vulnerable adopting Indigenous knowledge systems in their teaching or feel that they never really quite know enough. Non-Indigenous instructors can thus feel like teacher candidates, believing it is not appropriate for them to use local knowledge and practices and fearing they are being disrespectful (Belczewski, 2009). Still, some instructors may not see the possibilities for connections to Indigenous perspectives in their courses (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013). Non-Indigenous instructors taking on the role of allies face the same kind of resentment or resistance from students and colleagues that their Indigenous academic counterparts experience when they emphasize Indigenous content and perspectives in their course curriculum (Christie & Asmar, 2012). As a result, these instructors may continually need to reflect on what it means to be an effective ally in supporting Indigenous knowledges in the classroom (Kovach et al., 2015). For some non-Indigenous faculty who teach Indigenous studies courses and components within existing courses, the challenge is to deconstruct their own privilege by examining their epistemological assumptions and intellectual traditions, and the way these maintain dominant discourses and structures of the academy (Biermann, 2011; Kelly, 2013).

In Canada, as faculties of education have increased their course and content offerings in Indigenous education, Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators have shared their experiences, describing the pedagogical frameworks they use to engage teacher candidates. Their strategies include learning from Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers, land- and place-based pedagogies, experiential learning, and decolonizing activities. The majority of our knowledge in this area comes from self-studies. Non-Indigenous teacher educators tend to consider their position as settler-scholar-educator (Kerr, 2014; Scully, 2015) and how this social location plays a role in how and what they teach (Belczewski, 2009; Chambers, 2006; Kerr, 2014; Nicol & Korteweg, 2010; Oberg, Blades, & Thom, 2007; Scully, 2012). For example, Kerr (2014) emphasizes the modelling of being taught by Indigenous perspectives in readings and activities, and extending that engagement to the pre-service teachers. Nicol and Korteweg (2010) convey how they must constantly reflect on their efforts to decolonize their own teaching practices. In contrast, Indigenous autobiographical accounts tend to emphasize

pedagogical strategies with teacher candidates, with less attention given to how their identities impact on their teaching (Cannon, 2012; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Wolf, 2012). For example, Cannon (2012) argues that we need pedagogical frameworks in teacher education that underscore identity-making processes that are specific to colonization and non-Indigenous Canadians. He explains two approaches that he uses to help pre-service teachers question their privilege and take responsibility for histories of settler colonialism. Drawing on her work in teacher education, Judy Iseke-Barnes (2008) lays out two activities that help emerging and practicing teachers understand how oppression and the dynamics of power impact on Indigenous experiences. These self-narratives and descriptive pedagogies demonstrate how teacher candidates learn about their prospective work as teachers in classrooms, with a focus on how their instructors are approaching the teaching of Indigenous content, perspectives, and pedagogies.

In summary, there is a small but growing body of literature that describes the different experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors teaching Indigenous content, perspectives, and pedagogies in teacher education settings. In addition, various pedagogical strategies have been detailed in the research on Indigenous education that align with theoretical framings and specific pedagogies. As Indigenous education is set to become part of the common practice in teacher education across Canada, through instruction that is integrated into coursework or that forms mandatory courses, what stands out is the growing number of self-studies and personal narratives that account for how instructors engage in the practices of Indigenous education.

While an understanding of the pedagogical practices may be extracted from this scholarship, less is known about the pedagogical complexities or personal vulnerabilities that emerge as a result of the identities that the instructors bring to teaching Indigenous education coursework. Other gaps relate to the perspectives of students who take Aboriginal education courses, the impact of such courses on their professional preparation, and considerations for what constitutes 'good' course content and pedagogy. In addition to research literature, a national mechanism for sharing successes and challenges about Indigenous teacher education was established by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education in 2013: an annual Indigenous Teacher Education Symposium.

National dialogues and action on Aboriginal teacher education

In 2013, on behalf of the ACDE, NITEP and the Office of Indigenous Education at the University of British Columbia sponsored an Indigenous teacher education symposium and invited representatives from Faculties of Education across Canada to participate in a dialogue to share their experiences, successes, and challenges related to recruitment, programs, community relationships, and retention. The ACDE has continued to support this national gathering as one of its collective projects with a teacher education program agreeing to host the event each year: BC, Alberta, Labrador/New Foundland, New Brunswick have been hosts and Manitoba

will host the 2017 gathering. These national gatherings have provided important opportunities for networking and learning from each other's experiences. This national gathering also has the potential to discuss future policy development about Aboriginal teacher education and to begin cooperative actions.

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)

In June 2015, the CMEC sponsored an Aboriginal Educator's Symposium at Yellowknife, NWT. The purposes of this national form were to learn from new and experienced Aboriginal educators about ways to attract more Aboriginal people to a teaching career, to support their completion of teacher education programs, how to encourage retention of educators once they are in the teaching force, and how to support Aboriginal educators in their career development. The CMEC continues to include the goal of "Supporting the professional development of Aboriginal students interested in pursuing teaching as a career: considering teacher-training needs, sharing knowledge, and initiating dialogue among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal education" in its 2015-17 CMEC Aboriginal Education Plan.[14] However, no further detail in how it will carry out this goal or how it will incorporate the recommendations from the June 2015 national gathering is shown on its web site. Another major set of RCAP recommendations referred to public post-secondary institutions and how they addressed Indigeneity.

Public Post-secondary Institutions
In reference to public post-secondary institutions RCAP recommended that (1) Public post-secondary institutions have a comprehensive strategy to increase participation and retention of Aboriginal learners: Aboriginal curriculum, meeting spaces, Aboriginal appointments to Board of Governors, Aboriginal student unions, support services, and cross-cultural sensitivity training for faculty and staff; (2) Post-secondary institutions recognize Aboriginal languages on equal basis to modern languages for entrance requirements and second language requirements; and (3) Elders have an active role in education throughout levels and systems and be compensated as professionals and education institutions facilitate exchanges among Elders.

The K-12 education section examined Ministries of Education and their Indigenous education strategies across Canada. Continuing with the examination of systemic strategies that promote Indigenizing education, this section first presents ways that three provincial Ministries of Advanced Education undertake this responsibility and then some exemplars of college/university practices that address the RCAP recommendations noted above. An environmental scan of provincial and territorial Ministries of Advanced Education web sites was conducted. The examples selected for discussion either have a separate Indigenous post-secondary strategy or incorporate Indigenous post-secondary education into the overall strategy. It was

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[14] see http://www.cmec.ca/532/Programs-and-Initiatives/Aboriginal-Education/CMEC-Aboriginal-Education-Plan-2015–2017/index.html

difficult to identify Indigenous specific strategies in some jurisdictions; therefore, they were not included. The phrases "Indigenize the Academy" or "Indigenization" have been used by more colleges and universities across Canada in the last decade. Some exemplars of Indigenizing post-secondary education will be discussed below.

Provincial Aboriginal Post-secondary Policy Frameworks

In British Columbia an *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future* (Framework) was launched in 2012 with vision, goals, strategies, and 2013, 2016, and 2020 targets. The Framework was developed in partnership with many Indigenous communities and organizations. It includes systemic changes such as Aboriginal representation on Board of Governors, capital funding projects for Aboriginal student gathering spaces, student funding, supporting community based programs, and increasing transition from K-12 to post-secondary education. They have included a 2013/14 report on progress[15]. This Ministry's web site includes a fair amount of detail about their funded programs.

Saskatchewan does not have a separate Aboriginal education policy framework but it includes goals of increasing First Nation and Métis student post-secondary enrollment and completion. This province funds various post-secondary institutes and programs to achieve this goal. A report is included in the province's annual reporting process[16].

Ontario developed the "Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework, 2011" in consultation with many people. Progress reports are set for every three years. The first report, 2014 indicated success in establishing strong relationships among colleges, universities, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. One common outcome is that all publicly funded colleges and universities have Aboriginal Education Councils. There are many examples of programs and initiatives related to the plan's goals; however, very little student data is included to reinforce the success claims. Total investment in Aboriginal post-secondary education for 2011-14 was $83.5 million.[17] In response to the TRC, Ontario's plan, "The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples" sets out expenditures that total $250 million. The Ontario government will work with Indigenous partners to develop programs aimed at reconciliation over a three-year period (2016-19). For post-secondary education the Ontario government also announced $97 million for Indigenous post-secondary education and training.

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[15] See http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/aboriginal-education-training
[16] See http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2015-16/2015-16AdvancedEducationAnnualReport.pdf
[17] See http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/APSET2015ProgressReport.pdf

College and University Aboriginal Post-secondary Strategies

Based on the knowledge and experience of the authors, the majority of colleges and universities appear to have specific Aboriginal strategic plans or include Aboriginal post-secondary education as one of it priorities in their respective college/university strategic plans; sometimes both. Conducting an environmental scan of Canadian colleges' and universities' strategic plans was not possible, given the limited resources for writing this article. However, future research projects could include examining the character and impact of institutional strategic plans. However, we identified some recent national publications, such as *University Affairs* (Macdonald, 2016[18]) and repositories, *Universities Canada*, that indicate growing interest and descriptions of programs and actions to Indigenize the academy through Indigenous programs/courses; physical student spaces for gathering, learning, and support services that reflect Indigenous architecture and/or culture; Indigenous leadership positions; and Indigenous advisory councils.

Building or refurbishing existing facilities for Indigenous gathering spaces requires much institution, government, and private sector funding and commitment. Some examples of new buildings include:
- The First Nations Longhouse at the University of British Columbia was the first of its kind at a Canadian university (opened in 1993)
- The First People's House (Longhouse style) at the University of Victoria, opened in 2010
- The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Centre at the University of Saskatchewan opened in 2015
- The First Peoples' Pavilion at the University of Quebec, Val-d'Or campus
- In British Columbia, the Ministry of Advanced Education provided funding for Indigenous student gathering spaces, which resulted in 24 post-secondary institutes receiving such funding.

Universities Canada (UC, 2015) with a membership of 97 universities released its 13 principles on Indigenous education that focused on their commitment to improve Indigenous education in their universities. One useful UC project has been to create a database of 350 Indigenous oriented programs and student services at university across Canada. UC also released some data on a 2013 survey of its membership, with a 90% return rate that indicated the following:
- 61 universities (2/3) offer university transitions programs for Indigenous students;
- 25 Indigenous languages are taught;
- more than75% of the universities offer cultural activities for Indigenous students;
- 71% have a partnership with local Indigenous communities; and

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[18] See University Affairs, http://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/indigenizing-the-academy/

- 33% of Indigenous programs are offered off campus[19] (Universities Canada, 2015).

One area of innovation has been the establishment of Elders-in-Residence programs at colleges and universities. Trent University, the first university to establish an Indigenous Studies Department has had Elder tenure track positions since 1975[20]. Trent sponsors an annual Elders and Traditional People's Gathering and celebrated the 40th anniversary of this gathering in 2016. Vancouver Island University includes an Elders-in-Residence program for the Indigenous Studies program that began in 1992. The Elders' program expanded to be a university-wide service administered through the Office of Aboriginal Education. An evaluation was conducted in 2010 that examined the value of impact of the VIU Elders' Program. The findings indicate that students valued the holistic aspect of learning and interacting with Elders and at the same time felt that Elders did not receive institutional respect for their knowledge and roles. Faculty and staff were fairly positive about the role and impact of Elders, yet, some felt a tension between their pedagogy and that of Elders'. Recommendations included: increasing the time that Elders have to carry out their roles; that all students, faculty, and staff have access to Elders; improve policies and protocols about the care of Elders while in their roles; and provide professional development experiential experiences for faculty and staff about working with Elders (Martine & Drees, 2011).

Discussion

Systemic Actions: Successes and Challenges

There have been some major advances and innovations in Indigenous post-secondary education since 1996. These innovations require system-wide cooperation and commitment from institutional leaders. Long-standing programs Indigenous teacher education, Indigenous law, and Indigenous studies began offering their programs in the late 1960s and 1970s. To continue offering such programs also requires immense effort, commitment, and leadership, often carried out by Indigenous faculty and staff and non-Indigenous allies. This section first focused on Indigenous teacher education programs that address the RCAP recommendations and their strengths include: (1) community-based relationships and sites; (2) Indigenous knowledge that shapes teaching and learning; and (3) the introduction of Aboriginal language revitalization courses and programs. There is a small but growing corpus of research about Indigenous teacher education programs.

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[19] See http://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/issue-closing-canadas-indigenous-gap-oct-20151.pdf

[20] See https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=pdfs/conferences/2007/trent-university.pdf

Not enough is known about how many Indigenous teacher education students enroll in teacher education programs across Canada; what their experiences are related to admission and program completion; what graduates' experiences are in transitioning to teaching careers; and how such programs are funded and what their challenges are in relation to funding.

A fairly new trend of requiring all teacher candidates/students to take a required Indigenous education course or equivalent learning is occurring in teacher education programs across Canada. Again, a small but growing corpus of research is examining instructor experiences in teaching such courses. What is needed is more of this type of research as well as the impact on teacher candidates and more about the successes and challenges of pedagogy and approaches. The teacher education research and ways of expanding national dialogue through groups such as the Canadian Association of Deans of Education and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada need to continue. One national association, Universities Canada has created publications on Indigenous post-secondary student data and opportunities for dialogue and cooperation as discussed above. There appears to be an increase in Indigenous post-secondary educational programs and services in recent years.

Universities Canada notes that from 2013-15 there was a 33% increase in in programming and student services for Indigenous students. The growth of Indigenous oriented learning programs and student services may seem recent; however, in order to develop Indigenous community relationships, secure funding, and acquire university approval for new programs takes years. The next challenge is to sustain these programs and services. Many post-secondary institutes are facing current budget deficits and challenges and more Indigenous people are interested in pursuing post-secondary education so student funding remains a big challenge. Returning to the 'closing the gap' goal, the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that 9.8% of Indigenous people aged 25-64 have a university degree compared to 26.5% of the non-Indigenous Canadian population of the same age. It may appear that post-secondary institutions as systems have created some fairly recent systemic change to make their learning environments and processes more culturally relevant and safe for Indigenous learners.

To close the gap will require constant vigilance to monitor these changes and to make improvements to them as the need arises. There is no 'quick' fix, nor is there one single answer. The holistic approaches, or strategic plans, that seem to have promise or that have demonstrated some success include: partnerships with Indigenous communities/organizations; use of Indigenous knowledge systems for learning and student support programs; expanding the Indigenous faculty and staff, including Elders; increasing non-Indigenous student, faculty, staff awareness and knowledge about Indigenous history, culture, and current situations; and monitoring progress consistently over time.

Lessons Learned

The following systemic actions could be considered positive achievements regarding the major RCAP recommendations that were noted at the beginning of this section about post-secondary education:

- Indigenous teacher education, which offers Indigenous-based programs to people of Indigenous ancestry has a rich 40+ year history. Much can be learned about how these programs work with Indigenous communities/organizations-based education; create culturally responsive programs while also ensuring its teacher candidates learn knowledge and acquire skills required for professional certification; and how it helps its teacher candidates deal with the impact of colonization on their families and Indigenous communities more generally.

- Teacher education programs are leading the post-secondary approach of mandatory learning about Indigenous history and culture as recommended by RCAP (1996) and the TRC (2015). More needs to be learned about the challenges and successes of such mandatory learning.

- System-wide, holistic, and comprehensive strategies for Indigenous post-secondary education are emerging in colleges and universities across Canada, while a few Ministries of Advanced Education and Training appear to have comprehensive strategies and fewer report on Indigenous post-secondary student enrollment and retention.

- Colleges and universities have varied Elders-in-Residence programs that may be part to full time. The roles of Elders may include teaching and mentoring students and advising faculty and staff. Not much is known about how Elders perceive their roles, challenges they experience, and the impact of Elders on the academy.

Some issues noted in this section could form future policy core issues. They include:

- Encouraging more provincial and territorial governments to increase their systemic approaches for Indigenous post-secondary education and to communicate those on their web sites. The brief environment scan of governmental web sites on advanced education often did not provide a prominent place for Indigenous education, except for British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Nunavut listed only Arctic College, which provides post-secondary education in this territory and the Northwest Territories listed Auroa College as providing its post-secondary education programs.

- Reporting on Indigenous post-secondary student enrollment and completion rates that includes but is not limited to teacher education.

- Conducting more research on Indigenous teacher education that includes students' perspectives, programmatic impact, and transition to career/work.

- Conducting more research on the successes, challenges, and impact of college and university strategic plans.

Community (to be written)

Conclusion (to be written

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