

INCLUSIVENESS AND RELEVANCE IN FIRST NATIONS/PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM SCHOOLING: IT'S ALL ABOUT PRAXIS OF ABORIGINAL SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE TUITION AGREEMENT EDUCATION FIELD

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Abstract / Résumé

Western education in context and structure is extremely hostile to Native people. The process of institutionalization in the Native education field, in the public education system, continues to be racist and discriminatory. The author suggests that one means of dealing with this internal colonialism is through a praxis of tuition agreement negotiations. The author describes in detail the intent and content of such negotiations.

L'éducation occidentale, tant dans son contexte que dans sa structure, se montre extrêmement hostile aux Autochtones. La procédure d'institutionnalisation dans le domaine de l'éducation autochtone, au sein du système d'éducation publique, continue à être raciste et discriminatoire. L'auteur suggère qu'une manière de résoudre ce colonialisme intérieur repose sur des négociations plus pratiques sur les ententes relatives aux frais de scolarité. L'auteur décrit en détails la visée et le contenu de telles négociations.

† *Professor Burns passed away June 4, 2000.*

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Contextual Background

The First People adapted, thrived and flourished for tens of thousands of years prior to European occupation of North America. When the Europeans arrived in the western hemisphere, Native people were sovereign, strong militarily, and numerically and economically self-reliant (Hirschfeider and Kreipe de Montana, 1993). This overall success, prior to the offshore arrival of Europeans to Turtle Island, was largely a result of both the innerconnectedness and interconnectedness of elements comprising Aboriginal world views including ideas, beliefs, values, and norms which existed as integral components of social, personality and cultural systems. Combined, each contributed to the overall effective functioning of organizational structures and social practices underpinning Native society (Burns, 1996). Long before Europeans arrived in North America, each of the numerous First Nations' groups had evolved its own form of education (Kirkness, 1992 cited in Maina, 1997). And, as Maina (1997) points out, there was tremendous diversity in approaches to education across First Nations' groups. The principal agents of social, cultural, economic, political, spiritual, and educational interaction with the First People,¹ both during and following colonization, have had encumbering effects on the Native people and their political, economic, cultural, educational, kinship, and spirituality systems of beliefs, values, and practices. The various unrelenting and devastating effects on the Native people and their social systems of effectiveness have been institutionalized through legislation, policies, and institutional practices which can be characterized as being hegemonic, prejudicial, racist, discriminatory and oppressive in character, intent and effect.

Education in First Nations was traditionally a holistic experience leading to the development of skills needed for recreation, hunting, farming, security, environmental protection, trading and governance prior to the European context and the imposition of colonialist governments of their own ethnocentric and self-serving values and systems; thereby, destroying self-esteem and pride, resulting in family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse and very limited access to educational systems (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Historically, self-determination and self-sufficiency have been essential characteristics of Aboriginal communities and the social systems of effectiveness around which diversity across communities was organized. Institutionalized policies of colonization, assimilation, integration, racism and systemic discrimination have eroded the nature, scope, and effective functioning of the cultural systems of the Aboriginal Peoples leaving a legacy of on-going oppression, suffering, opportunities denied, and the actual tormentation of Canada's Native population (Comeau and Santin, 1995; York, 1992).

There is a false logic of racism underpinning systemic discrimination within external colonialism and internal colonialism. The First Peoples were characterized in similar ways in colonized countries throughout the world. In a public education system school text (see Robertson, 1890) authorized by the Education Department of Ontario (1892:193), the early inhabitants of America were described as follows:

We do not know who they were but we do know that they were not English, French, or the ancestors of any of the white or black people now living in Canada and the United States... Nor were the people now known as North American Indians the first to inhabit this Continent, as many remains exist of a more civilized race.

This public school history textbook also described the Aboriginal peoples as follows:

North American Indians - The "Mound builders" were followed by a fiercer and ruder people that cared for little except hunting and fishing, making war and roaming the forests. Very little interest was taken by them in tilling the soil, a few tribes growing small quantities of maize or Indian corn in clearings in the dense forests which covered most of the country... These tribes were much alike in their appearance, manners and customs. Tall, sinewy, copper-colored, with straight black hair, black eyes, high cheek bones—they were keen of sight and hearing, swift of foot, fond of war, cruel to their enemies and generally true to their friends... Indian women did all the work and drudgery; the men when not hunting, fishing, or fighting, lived a lazy life, and spent their spare hours sleeping, gambling, and story-telling. Such were the people the first European settlers found in the greater part of North America (p.194).

Indeed, the false logic of prejudice, stereotyping, racism and systemic discrimination continues to unfold in the public education system; a system of monocultural education within which schools are active agents of ideological hegemony (Sallach, 1974; Foucault, 1982); schools whose knowledge and information base tends to reinforce the cultural capital of the dominant group while degrading subordinate groups in general and Aboriginal world views and culture in particular.

Over the past several hundred years, Canadian society has endeavoured to systematically strip the Native people of their land, their culture, their spiritual beliefs, and their way of life (Chisholm, 1994). The Canadian state has been and continues to be unrelenting in its on-going attempts to break the Native spirit. Canada has been proactively involved in cultural

genocide pertaining specifically to the Native peoples. The Canadian state has enacted laws, sanctioned churches, and used schools to eradicate customs, languages and traditions of the First Peoples as components of sustained multi-variant strategies to assimilate the Native people and to eradicate them from the larger Canadian society as a distinct people (Comeau and Santin, 1995). Virtually all governmental organizations within federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions have served as instruments of domination and control in efforts to marginalize the aspirations, needs, interests, and rights of Native people, and the educational system has been among the worst (York, 1992). The public educational system continues to be among the worst. Western education in context and structure is extremely hostile to Native people (Hampton, 1995).

Education research pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults in Canada is comprehensive. Both descriptive and analytic research characterizes in considerable detail federal government education themes and policies of segregation, assimilation, and more recently the integration of Native children into the mainstream culture of the public education system via master tuition agreement arrangements (Armitage, 1995; Common and Frost, 1994; Frideres, 1993; Barman, Herbert and McCaskill, 1987; Burns, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998). The research also describes the negative impacts of education policies of segregation, assimilation and integration pertaining specifically to Native children; none of which are defensible in a democracy or acceptable to the Native peoples (Longboat, 1987; McDonald, 1997). Comprehensive research undertaken by the Native peoples, first in reaction to the federal government's White Paper entitled "Statements of Government of Canada on Indian Policy" (1969), and more recently, in terms of current problems of recognition, equity, social justice, due process, self-determination, self-government and so on—provide insights into social, political, and economic issues of concern to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Those studies (see in particular the National Indian Brotherhood response to the White Paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, 1972; *Assembly of First Nations Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future*, 1988; *Sharing the Knowledge - the Path to Success and Equal Opportunities in Education*, 1996; the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996) also provide detailed information on both the legacies of the past and the nature and scope of actual changes needed in education policies and practices pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) is particularly revealing. It contextualizes the past, the present, and the future in stating that:

The Aboriginal People have long been the object of attempts by state and church authorities to use education to control and assimilate them, during the residential school era, but also more subtly, today...; the Aboriginal people want two main things from education—schools to help children, youth and adults to learn the skills they need to participate fully in the economy, and schools to help children develop as citizens of Aboriginal nations—with the knowledge of their languages and traditions necessary for cultural continuity...; the educational system does not accomplish either of the above goals..., the majority of Aboriginal youth do not complete high school... they leave high school with neither the credentials for jobs in the mainstream economy nor a grounding in their languages and cultures... they are very likely to have experienced the ignorance and hatred of racism, which leaves them profoundly demoralized and angered...; almost 70 percent of Aboriginal children are taught in provincial or territorial schools, mainstream educational systems have few mechanism of accountability to Aboriginal people and has made few attempts to reach out and involve Aboriginal parents or the Aboriginal community (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

These observations and social facts exist as tragic testaments to the educational failure of federal government policies and practices of segregated residential schooling, assimilation and integration of Native children, youth and adults into public education system schools through master tuition agreement arrangements. Segregated residential schooling and schooling in the public education system have never existed as instruments for enhancing the self-determination of the Aboriginal people as a distinct and unique people and this in itself has not been a happenstance. In the White western paradigm of education, ethnocentrism, attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, the denial of difference and the suppression of difference pertaining specifically to Aboriginal peoples is synonymous with racism and systemic discrimination in education. The process of institutionalization in the Native education field, in the public education system, continues to be racist and discriminatory in character. The overall process of institutionalization in the public education system is firmly rooted in a highly entrenched praxis of overwhelming coercion, domination and control; attitudes of racial, cultural and social superiority; denial of difference; and suppression of difference as reflected in the educational policies and practices within different levels of government and in ministries of education, education institutions, professional organizations, school governance

organizations and schools (Burns, 1996b, c; 1997, 1998a, c). The overall process is also rooted in on-going hegemonic practices of both Eurocentric colonialism of earlier times and the institutional workings of internal colonialism of today (Welch, 1996).

Internal colonialism involves the subordination and continuing domination of a previously independent nation within the borders of another nation state (Altback and Kelly, 1984). Colonialism, on the other hand, involves the domination of one nation by another. As a nation state, Canada continues to dominate, control and oppress the descendants of the First Peoples. In Canada, the public education system continues to serve as an instrument to prevent First Nations from gaining *de facto* political, social and economic independence from colonial powers. Native control of Native education and Native inclusiveness in both the public education system and public system schooling are essential prerequisites to any attempt to achieve self-determination and both economic and political independence from social systems controlled by the culture of domination; the culture of White privilege; and the vicissitudes of colonialism, internal colonialism, non-Native cultural capital, globalism, and other forces which give structure to coercive relationships of power, domination, control and exploitation. And yet, the Native people remain optimistic. They continue to believe that education can be a positive force in the pursuit of cultural competence and confidence for their children and for themselves (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996:83). I believe such optimism will fall short of expectations in the absence of the Aboriginal peoples asserting themselves through a praxis of self-determination in the public education system.

White Privilege

In provincial school board systems, there are elected trustees, administrators, school council members, and teaching personnel who continue to espouse assimilation and/or integration in matters of education practices pertaining to Native children, youth and adults. Such a stance, however, is highly unlikely to be brought up front, in different spheres of the public education system, say as in the case of written statements of intent at provincial government, Ministry of Education, school board or school levels of the system. In a recent study (see Burns, 1998b, c), the following verbatim comments of a secondary school principal are found to be particularly revealing.

The Native elect to come to this school because of what we have to offer... they don't expect to be treated differently than anyone else...teachers treat everyone the same, as they

should... In this school, we respect everyone... We respect the right to take courses... We respect the right to succeed... The Native students are assimilated... they wouldn't have it any other way... they want to be students like everyone else... Where do you get this idea that they are a distinct peoples and that they should somehow be treated differently than others or viewed as being different from others... ?

The hostility of western education to First Nations' culture begins with pervasive ignorance about issues of culture and race (Maina, 1997). As Hampton (1995) points out, some well-meaning educators see education as culturally neutral; a practice whose manifestations are reflected in defence mechanisms of denial of difference.

Those who continue to espouse assimilationist, integrationist and denial of difference of views within the context of public education system schooling fail to recognize or value the Native people as a distinct and unique people within the fabric of Canadian society. They are pervasively ignorant of the fact that the Native people are a self-determining people, a self-governing people, and a people who have the right to Native inclusive-ness schooling in the public system of education. To such educators, the Aboriginal people are an actual threat to the social order of White culture, status, power, privilege, and opportunity. Stated differently, and within a broader context of linguistic, cultural and racial diversity in society, the Native people are seen as a threat to social cohesion by those who espouse assimilation in matters of education policy and practice (Cummins, 1981). Unearned skin privilege pervades the culture of an assimilationist public education system. White privilege in school settings is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools and blank cheques underpinning the practices of the culture of domination (McIntosh, 1990).

The possessors of White privilege, be they legislators, trustees, administrators, teachers, professors, parents, or students, are conditioned into oblivion about their attitudes of cultural and racial superiority and the existence of their privilege. They do not value the culturally different. They do not value the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Aboriginal peoples. They come to believe their lives are morally neutral, normative, average, and also ideal. When they work toward benefiting others, as in the case of working towards benefiting Native people through paternalism, they see this work as socially beneficial as it allows the Native people to become more like them. It was this very set of Eurocentric beliefs, ethnocentric beliefs, attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, denial of difference, suppression of difference and distorted racist beliefs that allowed Europeans, during the

age of colonization, to rationalize attempts to remake the First Peoples in the European image and to carry out other activities of plunder, exploitation, and conquest (Corson, 1997). In Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia, possessors of White privilege have a history of engaging in social, political and economic activities which are pervasively genocidal when it comes to the culture of the Aboriginal peoples. As Hampton (see Maina, 1997) points out, it must be straight forwardly realized that education, as currently practiced, is cultural genocide... it seeks to brainwash the Native child, substituting non-Native for knowledge, values and identity. Plus ça change, plus ça change pas in society and in the public education system.

White Privilege and Assimilationist Thinking

At the level of the normative order in Canada, the Native people exist as a distinct and unique people who have both inherent and constitutional rights to self-determination and self-government as well as the right to regain control over First Nations' education and other institutions affecting their life style, life way and life chance conditions. And, those are the social facts (see in particular Constitution Act 1982; Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future, 1988; MacPherson Report, 1991; United Nations, 1993; Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Assimilation and integration are in direct contrast to the goals of self-determination and self-government. Native self-determination in public education system schooling is not a public education goal. It is, however, a Native education goal. The primacy of the culture of domination and the cultural currency of White privilege and power prevail in the public education system. Appleton (1983) describes how this tendency is translated into policies and practices at school setting levels. First, conformity to the cultural orientation of the dominant group is reflected in and promoted by the curricular content, instructional processes, and organizational structures and practices of the schools. Second, different ethnic perspectives, languages, and cultures are devalued; they are not considered conducive to attaining educational goals. Proponents of assimilationist and/or integrationist positions do not endorse or support Native inclusiveness in First Nations/public education system tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements or tuition agreement school (Burns, 1998a); the idea of Native centric bicultural education for Native children, youth and adults in schools of the public education system; or reverse tuition agreement arrangements (Tsujii, 1998). This is compounded by the fact that a hidden curriculum also exists in schools. The hidden curriculum is comprised of the interactional, organizational, managerial, and social aspects of the overall school envi-

ronment (Shulman, 1986; Apple, 1983). These hidden aspects of public education schooling are not necessarily obvious at first glance. Yet, they also combine to have cumulative assimilative effect on Native students in the public education system.

In public education system schools, assimilationist thinking engenders a culture of schooling which promotes and rewards conformity to the culture of domination (the culture of White privilege) and everything that the culture of domination deems as important including its western ideological orientations, beliefs, values, language, dress codes, mainstream ways of doing things and so on. Precepts underpinning assimilation/conformity theory (see in particular Gordon, 1984) provide useful perspective to education policies and practices of both the past and present pertaining to Native students. They also provide perspective to colonial, paternalistic, oppressive approaches to provincial school boards/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling situations which have occurred in the past and which continue to occur today. Until recently, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) did not allow First Nations to enter into tuition agreement negotiations directly with publicly-funded school boards, on their own behalf. As with nearly every other aspect of Native life, the federal government, through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), negotiated on behalf of the Native people, signed master tuition agreements on their behalf and effectively left the First Nations without a say in the education of their children in public education system schooling (Ferguson, 1993).

Assimilationist and conformist thinking is based on a set of uncontested beliefs and false expectations. When Native children, youth, and adults are integrated into the culture of mainstream schools, the assimilationists' views are based on the assumption that it is a reasonable expectation that the Native people will cease to exist as a distinct people; that they will be remade in the White European image; and that this is what they want, and this is the way things should be. The view is based on the belief that Aboriginal world views including their distinctive practices potentially involving epistemologies, pedagogies, values, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, languages, heritage, cultures, traditions, interconnectedness of all things, social organizations, normative ways of doing things, and relationship to each other and the natural and spiritual worlds are irrelevant, dysfunctional and perfidious. Within the White western paradigm of education, all these distinct practices are replaced by those of the culture of domination; the culture of White privilege, status, and power. Notwithstanding the fact that assimilationist views are based on distorted ethnocentric and racist beliefs, what is not clear to assimilationist thinkers is that the Native people,

themselves, never actually get to experience White privilege, status and power within the value structures of mainstream society.

White privilege, in effect, is the power and privilege to dominate, control and exploit members of subordinate groups in society. These are not elements of Native world views. White privilege is not something to which the Native people aspire. They aspire towards self-determination. Native self-determination is a form of empowerment which never gets played out at the expense of others. White privilege, in the public education system, is a form of status, power and privilege which is seldom surrendered at a practical level by Ministry of Education officials, school board trustees, school principals, classroom teachers or members of faculty in teacher training institutions. This has implications for tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling. Where White privilege is pervasive throughout societies' contemporary institutions, agencies, and organizations including the public education system, both internal colonialism and assimilation abound!

The organization culture of White privilege and internal colonialism is all about limit situations and Native opportunities denied. Limit situations imply the existence of persons who are directly or indirectly served by these institutions, and those who are negated and curbed by them (Freire, 1973). Within a system of White privilege and internal colonialism, oppressors tend not to have within their own potential the capacity to move from a mode of coercive relations of power to a mode of collaborative relations of power with minoritized stakeholders (Burns and Smith, 1996). They have a vested interest in relations of power which provide continuity of their power, status, prestige and privilege. Those who are served by the present limit situations regard the feasibility of change as a threatening limit situation which must not be allowed to materialize and act to maintain the status quo (Freire, 1973). Internal colonialism occurs within state level institutions, agencies, and organizations of White privilege which influence, both directly and indirectly, educational laws, regulations, policies and practices; teacher certification, recruitment, and promotion; official language usage in schooling; the formal and informal curriculum of schools, and so on in the provision of varying opportunities to differing levels of its own "self-imaged" clientele. In the public education system, internal colonialism is a mode of White privilege which is indifferent to and tyrannical for subordinate groups including the racially and/or culturally different in general, and the Native peoples in particular.

False Logic of Structural Assimilation

Complete assimilation of the Native peoples has always been more of a social potential than a political, economic, or cultural fact throughout the world. Conceptually, assimilation occurs within the context of cultural and structural imperatives (Appleton, 1983; Gordon, 1984). When applied to the Native situation, and within the context of culture, Native children, youth and adults face a direct asymmetry of socio-cultural policy and practices whereby, collectively and individually, they are fully expected to adopt the world view, behaviours, values, beliefs, and life style of the dominating group through socialization practices underpinning school in the public education system. This normally gets structured around the belief, perception or stance that everyone is the same in mainstream schools, and therefore, to be treated equitably, everyone must be treated in the same ways. Assimilationists frequently argue that to do otherwise would be "racist", arguing that it is indefensible to treat different social groups differently. This false logic of racism and systemic discrimination towards the Native people is structured through arguments suggesting that the school is an institution which is neutral, apolitical, objective, and any school, in the public education system, which viewed or treated Native children, youth or adults differently than others would be de facto racist and discriminatory (Burns and Gamlin, 1995). All of this serves the interest of the culture of White privilege and White domination under the guise of equal treatment and sameness of treatment for all. Its effect and intent constitute a false logic of racism and discrimination masked by a policy of equal opportunities in a highly unequal exercise of cultural, social, political, and economic obliteration of the Native peoples (Cashmore, 1987).

Structural assimilation implies full and equal participation of the Native people in the social, political, economic and religious institutions and organizations of mainstream society. In provincial schools, outside of Quebec, in Canada, assimilation is synonymous with conformity to the tenets and practices of White western world view. This is a Eurocentric cultural tradition in which English institutions, language and cultural patterns are viewed as desirable, standard, and essential. As the Native people know, through their lived experience, even where fairly high degrees of mass cultural assimilation has been forced upon them through the work and practices of those involved in missionary work, the infamous residential schools, and public system schooling, cultural assimilation has not necessarily led to accrual of social, economic, political or cultural benefits alleged to come with structural assimilation. Stated differently, cultural assimilation does not lead to acceptable degrees of Native participation in society's opportunity structures consistent with economic and social norms of ac-

cess, opportunity, sharing, and distribution. Social barriers such as those manifested through stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and systemic discrimination combine to hinder or otherwise deny the Native peoples equity of access, equity of power, equity of opportunities, and equity of outcome in mainstream opportunity structures in society. Stated differently, structural assimilation is a non event for the Native peoples. Forces underpinning the workings of cultural assimilation have had the effect of denying the Native peoples equality of opportunities. They have had the effect of outcasting the Aboriginal people to the outer margins of life style and life chance opportunities available to others in Canadian society as is the case for Indigenous populations in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

Government Practices

The tormenting of Canada's Native population is not to be viewed as something that has occurred solely in the past. It continues to this day in the public education system and in other public institutions, organizations, and agencies. For example, in December 1993, the Ontario Government enacted the Employment Equity Act. As a result of this, employers were required to address inequities by setting specific goals for hiring and promoting employees in four affected groups—women, racial minorities, Aboriginals, and the disabled. That act was repealed on December 13, 1995, by the existing neo-conservative, progressive conservative government of Premier Mike Harris, a former elected school board trustee. The intent of the Act was to address problems related to prejudice, stereotyping, racism, and systemic discrimination resulting in the social construction of employment inequality in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) and the broader public sector including school boards, colleges, universities, public services and so on. A recent court decision has ruled the Government of Ontario did not violate anyone's rights when it repealed the Employment Equity Act two years ago. *Plus ça change, plus ça change pas!* The more things change, the more things remain the same. Relating this situation to the First Peoples, it becomes evident that the forces of colonialism and the forces of internal colonialism have similar effects. In the final analysis, they have the effect of institutionalizing White privilege, denial of difference, suppression of difference and marginalizing Aboriginal peoples to the outer margins of opportunity structures in mainstream society.

Governments are empirical entities. They exist as socially organized value structures which effect a broad range of institutional, organizational, and agency relations of power. The activities and relations of power of agencies of the state (the public education system is certainly an agency

of the provincial state) affect individuals and social categories of individuals, directly. As such, the activities and agencies of government should reflect the political, social and cultural values of social categories of all its citizens. At the level of the normative order, democracy purports to work towards improving the quality of human existence; for all, not just the privileged few. At the level of the normative order of expectations, democracy has to do with the action valuing of diversity, equality, social justice, and due process of voice, pertaining to all of society's citizens. It is evident from the activities and agencies of the provincial government that, as a society, the institution of government professes social responsibility and accountability to the people. It professes to respect diversity, equality, social justice, and citizen voice, within the context of its various policies and practices. Yet, there is a tremendous gap between the rhetoric and what occurs at the level of performance. In Ontario, this is particularly true in relation to the range of justice, fairness, and equality of opportunities required to redress problems of institutional discrimination against the Native peoples and social, economic, cultural and political inequalities resulting from the attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, White privilege, denial of difference, and suppression of difference within institutions including the public education system.

Culture is power and internal colonial cultures of domination continue to dominate in mainstream institutions, organizations, and agencies throughout Canadian society. As a further example, the majority of former members of the Ontario Native Employment Equity Circle (ONEEC) in the Ontario Public Service can attest to the fact that the recent downsizing and restructuring in the OPS (as part of a wider assault on the public sector, including the broader public service and municipalities) has resulted in de facto and perhaps deliberate ethno-racial/ethno-cultural cleansing of the Native peoples from publicly funded mainstream institutions, organizations, and agencies including those within the Ontario Public Service. First, the recent election of a neo-conservative government in Ontario; secondly, repeal of the Employment Equity Act; thirdly, the withdrawal of funding which facilitated minoritized groups in the OPS including Aboriginal, women, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities, to meet as distinct groups resulting in the disbandment of ONEEC as the Native membership no longer had a forum to meet as a group² around common issues and concerns; fourth, the downsizing and restructuring of the OPS and other government related agencies; and fifth, the process of social transformation whereby, like the Beothuk, the Native people simply disappear. Ah, the more things change the more things remain the same for the Native peoples. The life styles and life chances of the Native peoples continue to be abysmal when compared to the life styles and life chances

of their both non-Native colonial counterparts (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Government policies and practices of the day continue to be instrumentally effective in tormenting the Aboriginal people. They exist as mechanisms of cultural domination, political oppression, economic exploitation, denial of difference and suppression of difference as they pertain to Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, the culture of the OPS has re-evolved into a patriarchal culture of White privilege, domination and control. In Ontario, the Native peoples are unable to assert themselves in the OPS, the public education system and mainstream society.

Eurocentricity, White privilege, attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, denial of difference and suppression of difference have had ethnocidal effects on the Aboriginal peoples. The Aboriginal peoples of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States have experienced similar invasion, genocide, and appropriation; occasionally to the level of extinction! The legacies of colonialism are all too clear. They are all too deep in institutional structures, and must be dealt with. They cannot, however, be meaningfully addressed in the absence of interrogating practices underpinning internal colonialism, White privilege, attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, denial of difference and suppression of difference in relationship to the Aboriginal peoples.

Past colonial practices and current internal colonialism have similar effects. June 24, 1996, was celebrated in Canada as 500 years since the arrival of John Cabot to the eastern shores of Newfoundland. The *Matthew*, a replica of John Cabot's ship, sailed the Atlantic Ocean from Bristol to Bonavista Bay with a crew of nineteen. Its crew was greeted by Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on the very shores where the Beothuk no longer exist. Through the eyes of Christian colonialists, the First Peoples were seen as poor infidels captivated by the devil...heathens to be saved...savages who lived in sinfulness and practiced idolatry thirsting for Christianity (Marshall, 1996:26). From earliest encounters, Europeans described the Beothuk as inhumane and wild; had no more God than beast; and were bad people (Dickason, 1997). Since colonization, the Beothuk have become all but extinct. The Beothuk were not mentioned or acknowledged during the official Cabot celebrations. It's as though they never existed. Assembly of First Nations' Chief Ovide Mercredi and about thirty others protested in Bonavista, Newfoundland, proclaiming that the celebrations overlooked Indians' suffering after Cabot's discovery; an observation that is all too true. Similarly, the sons and daughters of the First Peoples are all but extinct in the Ontario Public Services; they are also overrepresented among those who just disappear (dropout of school) in the public education system. There is no public discussion on these issues. It's

as though the Native people just disappear from time to time. Relatedly, through the eyes of White privilege, in Ontario, it's as though the Native people no longer exist in the OPS or public education system; they just blend in; they leave; they drop out; they just disappear.

Educating the First Peoples in Colonized Countries

Education for any child must never be used as an instrument to break children, break their spirit, fragment their identities, erode their sense of self worth, destroy their language, or devalue their culture in attempted cultural genocide against a people. Yet, these have been the education goals of both the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum of European style education as such goals pertain specifically to the sons and daughters of the First Peoples. The empirical evidence of appropriation—often flat out kidnapping of Native children, through agents of the state, results of economic conditions measured in terms of poverty, hopelessness, alcoholism, substance abuse, and suicide rates; and on-going calculative assaults on Native culture and the spirit are stark legacies which are well documented.

New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada alike have historically imposed and continue to impose (albeit along with a range of short lived alternative post modernistic practices) western models of education on the First Peoples. In the field of education, the dominant praxis in Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and Australia has been and continues to be directed towards attempted assimilation of the Native peoples into the majority European culture (the culture of social, economic and political domination), western world view, and western institutions (Armitage, 1995). In Canada, this is further complicated by the tendency in the public education system to address issues concerning problems of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and discrimination in the context of problems of multi-culturalism rather than in terms of issues pertaining specifically to the Native people, as a distinct and unique peoples striving to regain self-determination and self-government within the overall fabric of post-colonial Canadian society. As a group, Aboriginal children, youth, and adults, in Canada, are rarely considered separately from non-Aboriginal racial and ethno-cultural minorities in the public education system. In spite of the rhetoric, the Aboriginal peoples are either invisible or inclined not to be viewed separately from the social collectivity of other racial and ethno-cultural minority groups which comprise the multi-cultural dimension of Canadian society.

New Zealand is a country whose education system is predominantly mono-cultural. Over time, many Maori have moved to urban areas where

they lost contact with their linguistic, cultural and community roots. This situation, along with the long-standing absence of a distinct education system for Maoris; the absence in the mainstream educational system of formal recognition or appreciation of Maori history, culture, language, world view or contemporary Maori beliefs, values and practices—are assimilationist in both character and intent. Recent progressive developments in New Zealand seem to provide the basis for a degree of optimism among the First Peoples of Aotearoa. The rights of Maori are enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi; a treaty which includes equality in education as well as all other areas of human rights. The State Department of Education has established a special Division of Maori and Island Education with two sections dealing with the education of Maoris and Islanders in New Zealand Island Territories (Brell, 1998). Structurally, the New Zealand initiative is supported by a National Advisory Committee on Maori Education which has a mandate to report yearly to the Minister of Education. Over the past fifteen years, the Te Kohanga Reo Centre (language nest) programs, a set of community-based immersion, pre-school language nurseries involving language, culture, tradition and history are successful and were initially developed organizationally from within Maori communities (Smith, 1998). The ideas of these programs came from within Maori communities themselves (Smith, 1998). They have been inclusive of the Maori people at the outset, involving Maori Elders, Maori leadership, Maori teachers, Maori volunteers, Maori parents and Maori grandparents. These Maori inclusive programs have expanded to the point where there were 774 such programs in New Zealand, in 1996, involving more than 15,000 children. The licenced programs are accountable to Te Kohanga Reo National Trust for the ways in which they are adopted, developed, implemented, and managed.

The language nest initiative exists as an overall inclusive program which is supported by the New Zealand Government (Brell, 1998). As can be seen, the Te Kohanga Reo Centre education resistance movement has been widely implemented in New Zealand. By all accounts, these pre-school programs, involving approximately 50% of all Maori children who go to early childhood education, are highly successful. In 1997, there were also 59 licenced Kaupapa Maori education resistance programs in New Zealand (Else, 1997). The Kura Kaupapa Maori forms of state schooling (some up to year 13 level) provide opportunities for Maori students coming through Kohanga Reo to continue their education in Maori during the course of their elementary and secondary school careers. There are more than 4,000 students enrolled in these Maori inclusive self-determining modes of schooling.

According to some observers, the Te Kohanga Reo Centre programs and the Kura Kaupapa Maori modes of schooling have the potential of having highly pervasive positive effect both within Maori communities and in mainstream New Zealand education systems. Our own experience in the Native education change field raises an important question. What will be the effects of state level agencies of Pekeha power, status and privilege (such as the mainstream teaching profession in New Zealand) on the Te Kohanga Reo program, the Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling and other initiatives that are derivatives of those programs, if and when such agencies demand a voice in certification, programming, staffing, and curriculum matters? Perhaps in the final analysis *plus ça change, plus ça change pas*. Social progress among the First Peoples in colonized countries often remains short lived. It is clear, if the Maori people are to continue to regain through the workings of the Te Kohanga Reo program and the Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling, that the various elements of the incompatible sign systems of New Zealand European (Pekeha) cultures (see for example Corson, 1997) and the workings of internal colonialism (see Welch, 1996) must never be allowed by the First Peoples of New Zealand (Maori) to become part of the solution. The concepts, ideas, beliefs, values and normative ways of doing things in mainstream (dominant) institutions are at the core of problems—problems of White privilege, appropriation, denial of difference, suppression of difference, domination, control, and exploitation.

In Australia, prior to the 1950s, Aborigines were the victims of a praxis of benign neglect by the state government. To a considerable extent, while not morally or sociably defensible, the false logic of benign neglect is easy to understand when placed in historical context. Welch (1996:28) provides a partial perspective to the ensuing effects on the First Peoples of the false logic of racism underpinning colonialism in Australia:

When the British colonized Australia in the late eighteenth century, part of the non-material baggage which accompanied them was a conventional view of the superiority of the white race. Australian Aborigines were usually seen as the most wretched, primitive and miserable race on earth, with few if any redeeming qualities. This licensed the doctrine known as *terra nullius*, the view that when Australia was colonised by the British, the land was, for all intents and purposes, uninhabited and empty. This depended on an assumption that the indigenous Australian inhabitants, when scholarship is now revealing as having lived here for perhaps 100,000 years (Butlin, 1993) were "barbarous" and "unsettled" (Sullivan, 1993), and thus had no real title to uphold.

From the varied racist perspectives of the colonialists, it was not difficult to neglect those who did not exist. Cunningham (1827:39) also provides perspective to racism, within colonialism, in Australia:

If their intellectual functions... are thus so far above debasement, how is it that the abject animal state in which [the Aborigines] live... should place them at the very zero of civilization, constituting in a measure the connecting link between man and the monkey tribe?—for really some of the old women only seem to require a tail to complete the identity.

Such racist views do not harbour the potential valuing of First Peoples as distinct and unique peoples in positive ways; as a distinct and unique peoples whose social organizations, institutional structures, and cultural practices are different and worthy of being valued in terms of their very differences. Misconceptions that arose during initial contact between Europeans and Aboriginal cultures in colonized countries were housed within Eurocentric racist belief systems. It was a mode of thinking which harboured the fabric of poisoned relationships and systemic discrimination. It was also a mode of thinking within which domination, control, oppression and rationalized vested interest leading to activities of plunder, exploitation, and conquest was housed (Corson, 1997).³ Morgan (1998) raises an important question in stating that it remains to be seen whether education policy makers and technicians take the lead of the Australian High Court when, in 1992, it expunged the "terra nullus" and "Aboriginal intellectual terra nullus" forms of racism from the Australian statutes labelling the doctrine of terra nullus to be unconscionable, iniquitous and unjust.

Beginning with the establishment of the Eurocentric Native Institution in Blacktown in 1814, Aboriginal children were provided formal education with servitude in mind. In the 1950s and '60s, Aborigines children were provided education within a policy and praxis of assimilation where they were placed in state schools and required to follow the regular curriculum. The Australian education systems, with some minor exceptions, are as Eurocentric as they were fifty years ago (Morgan, 1998). While this official government policy of assimilation appears to have been abandoned, both life style and life chance situations for most Australian Aboriginals continue to remain abysmal. This situation prevails notwithstanding the work of the National Aboriginal Education Committee; work which has resulted in independent Aboriginal schools, Aboriginal family centres, programs at the South Australian Institute of Technology, Aboriginal programs and services in colleges for Aborigine trainee teachers, out station schools in remote communities, Aboriginal controlled pre-schools similar to community-based Kohanga Reos in New Zealand, and bilingual programs in regular schools

attended by Aborigines children (Armitage, 1995). Morgan (1998:5) summarizes the plight of Aboriginal students, within a system of masqueraded Aboriginal education, as follows:

... 12% of Aboriginal students are retained to senior years of high school and achievement levels are substantially lower than non-Aboriginal students. Other defining characteristics of the current realities for Aboriginal students enrolled in existing Eurocentric public education systems include: rampant absenteeism; racism is a daily experience for many students; exclusion/expulsion rates are disproportionately high and whilst it is true that "Aboriginal education" is on crisis, the education of Aboriginal boys is especially problematic, resulting in life threatening behaviours which are carried forward into adolescence and adulthood.

The system of Aboriginal education in the United States can be characterized as a praxis of benign neglect (prior to 1870s) and assimilation since then. Assimilation has been attempted through the inter-related goals of "civilizing" and "Christianizing" as cornerstone goals of schooling. The latter period has been associated with missionary initiatives having Christianizing, civilizing and assimilating Indian children through European style education as their goals. As in the case of Canada, much of this occurred in segregated boarding school settings for Native children. These were schools where White education was taught to Native children. Since the abolition of residential schools, numerous Native Americans now attend schools in the public education system. Indian self-determination in the United States is more of a potential than a fact. Relatedly, there is some evidence that federal domination of Aboriginal related programs and services has impeded rather than enhanced the progress of Indian people. Where progress has been made in the community-based and Indian controlled school fields, such progress appears to have been much more a function of Native community initiatives rather than through efforts within state education systems of the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

It is clear there are common themes in the education legislation, education policies, and education praxis fields pertaining specifically to Aboriginal children and youth in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. The Eurocentric cultures of domination in each of these colonizing countries have been and continue to be racist, oppressive, and discriminatory in matters pertaining to the First Peoples. Hegemony, as it pertains to the First Peoples, is premised on the notion that the culture of domination manifests itself through political power, economic control, cultural ideology, and pedagogy that results in domination, control, oppression,

subordination, domestication, assimilation, loss of freedom, and the enculturation of the First Peoples into mainstream, non-Native ideologies and western institutions (see in particular Gramsci, 1971; Giroux, 1983; Marcuse, 1995). Hegemony works through the manifestations of legislation, education, political systems, the economy and social practices impacting on the Aboriginal Peoples. Stated differently, the Nation state in colonized countries have used and continue to use, through processes of internal colonialism and globalism, social institutions including the political system, the economic system, organized religion, and the public education system as vehicles for irradiating the Aboriginal Peoples as a distinct and unique peoples, to disempower them and to take control over and maintain their lands and resources.

Praxis of Public Education System Schooling

The paramount political task in relation to public education system/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling is to identify, discuss, debate, understand, and intervene in the workings of hegemony and internal colonialism and praxis of domination, control, and oppression (Burns, 1998a). Hegemony filters through institutions and agencies including the federal government, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), the provincial government, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET), public education system school boards, public education system schools, the teaching profession, professional organizations, faculties of education, school governance organizations, and so on—all of which espouse to be neutral, independent and objective on matters of education policies and practices pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults. And yet, they are not neutral, independent, or objective! They are part of the state apparatus. They are interdependently engaged in an overall praxis of domination, control and oppression; an overall praxis which sustains White privilege and both denies and suppresses difference pertaining specifically to Aboriginal students in schools of the public education systems in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America.

In Canada, it is necessary throughout the course of tuition agreement negotiations with public education system jurisdictions to expose the workings of those institutions, agencies and organizations in such a way that the forces of the culture of White western paradigm of education and its violent, oppressive, disempowering, coercive, genocidal effects on Aboriginal students (as a distinct and unique social category of students) is uncovered, contested in open and honest dialogue, and altered towards practices of self-determination in education, Native inclusiveness in education and

empowerment. It is necessary to alter current hegemonic practices to a set of Native inclusive practices as integral and significant dimensions of the overall culture of tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement schooling, in the public education system. This is also true with respect to the organization culture of the Ministry of Education and Training, the organization culture of public school boards and the culture of schools. This is basic to any attempt to achieve relevance, excellence and equity in education pertaining specifically to students of First Nations' origin within tuition agreement education contexts, in the public education system, where this is the preferred option of First Nations. What is of key importance in this approach is that Aboriginal world view be fully asserted in the public education system for the overall benefit of Aboriginal students, non-Aboriginal students and indeed all human kind.

Tuition negotiations, tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling have occurred within coercive relations of power. They have been used as instruments of power, domination and control. Foucault (1972, 1977, 1980) provides a partial perspective to the workings of power: rather than a privilege that is ascribed to an individual, power itself is a network of relations constantly in tension and ever present in activity...; rather than possessed and localized in individual hands, power is exercised through the production, accumulation and functioning of various discourses...; rather than the mere verbalization of conflicts of domination, power is the very object of human conflict...; and, rather than concerned with conscious intention or decision, the study of power is best located at the point where any intentions of the powerful are invested in real and effective practices. Stated differently, the characteristics of tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling is synonymous with the characteristics of discourse. The nature of discourse underpinning praxis results in a culture of coercive relations of power or a culture of collaborative relations of power. Typically, tuition negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling have existed as instruments in the hands of the culture of domination (the powerful). They have existed as instruments of assimilation leading to the production of social relations of inequality between the White dominant society and the Aboriginal people. Combined, they have had the effect of denying the Native people their existence as a distinct and unique people and suppressing difference as a response to them. Combined, those instrumentalities have had the effect of dominating, controlling and oppressing Aboriginal students along with their culture, language, history, traditions, identities and beliefs during the course of their elementary and secondary school careers in the public education system. Are past educational policies and practices on Turtle

Island irrelevant to questions of public education system/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, agreements, and schooling in Ontario, in Canada, or in other jurisdictions in the world? I think not!

Hirschfelder and Kreipe de Montano (1993) provide the following elaboration:

Education is a way to induce Indians to adopt European life ways so they would disappear as a distinct people... education policies designed to force Indians to give up their culture...; ethnocentric belief of European-based culture being superior to Native culture...; belief that those sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated...; federal government funding of missionaries to do the moralizing...; education as forced assimilation, viewed as a humanitarian solution to the so-called Indian problem...; educating Indians in boarding schools located far away from tribal and parental influence...; the practice called outing in which students were not allowed to return home for vacations, but were placed as servants with white families...; the Indian problem being solved by making Indians disappear...; and uniform courses of study in federal Indian schools based on courses offered for non-Indians...

It is worth noting that, while the above practices are described in relation to the United States, they apply equally to Canada (see in particular the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, and the various reports of the Assembly of First Nations on educational issues pertaining to the Aboriginal peoples). They also seem to apply to practices which have occurred elsewhere in the world, including Australia and New Zealand.

Schooling Is All About Praxis

Provincial school boards/First Nations tuition agreement education can be conceptualized in terms of praxis of self-determination carried out in each of four phases: during negotiations, during school, during implementation of the agreement, and during monitoring of the effects of schooling and implementation. Such a praxis is in direct contrast to current praxis in tuition agreement negotiating and tuition agreement schooling fields. A praxis of Native self-determination in education, Native inclusiveness in education, and Native self-determination in public education system schooling is reflective, critical, dialogical and transformative in character, practice and intent (Burns, 1996). It is a self-determining cultural activity of the highest moral and political order. It is a self-determining cultural activity which seeks out that which has been denied Native students a) schooling which helps Aboriginal students to learn the skills they need to participate

fully in the economy, and b) schooling which helps Aboriginal students to develop as citizens of Aboriginal nations with the knowledge of their language, traditions, and world view necessary for cultural, social, political, economic and spiritual continuity. It is a cultural activity which asserts Native world views, the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal self-determination, Aboriginal self-government, and the importance of Native inclusiveness education, in the public education system.

Native self-determination in public education system schooling is unlikely to be achieved solely through a praxis of verbalism or activism. It is more likely to be achieved through a praxis of collaborative relations of power, open-honest dialogue, critical reflection and cultural action directed at the structures, processes, and cultural imperatives to be transformed involving tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, tuition agreement implementation, tuition agreement schooling and tuition agreement schooling outcomes.

Education personnel in public education systems/First Nations tuition agreement schools and First Nations' schools must evolve an agreed upon vision of First Nations' education in collaboration (Burns and Smith, 1996) with parents of Native students, Elders and other members of Aboriginal communities. The vision must be firmly rooted in beliefs, knowledge, understanding and proactive valuing of the Native Peoples as a distinct and unique peoples, a self-determining peoples, a self-governing peoples, and a people who are striving to regain control over education pursued by Aboriginal children, youth, and adults. Educators involved in Native education have to be familiar with Native heritage, Native culture, Native epistemology, Native knowledge, Native pedagogy, Native traditions, the work of Elders, the work of Native scholars and have the knowledge and experiential base that comprises a vision of Native inclusiveness in education; a vision whose manifestations pervade a culturally relevant bi-cultural curriculum in tuition agreement schools of the public education system.

A further factor that needs to be taken into consideration is that a school's curriculum pervades the entire culture of the school environment and not solely the culture of the classroom. A school's curriculum is a result of a praxis of domination, coercion, control and oppression or a praxis of self-determination, freedom and liberation. A Native inclusive curriculum cannot exist outside of Native inclusive structures. It is a curriculum which encompasses both Native inclusive content and Native inclusive processes. Content is the substance, the visible aspect of curriculum transmitted through the formal structure of academic content, planned learning experiences and instructional resources including teaching personnel. Process is the less visible "hidden" dimension of curriculum encompassing the inter-

actional, social, management, and organizational aspects of teaching and learning (Hernandez, 1989). In mainstream schools, curriculum content and curriculum processes fail to acknowledge, reflect, or reinforce the social fact that the Native Peoples are a distinct and unique peoples, a self-determining peoples, a self-governing peoples, a peoples who are striving to regain control over institutions affecting them. As a result of this, the formal and informal curriculum of public education system schools are dysfunctional when it comes to the inherent rights, treaty rights, constitutional rights as well as the educational and occupational aspirations and expectations of the Aboriginal peoples. Master tuition agreement negotiation processes have been intentionally dysfunctional for the Aboriginal peoples. They have been steeped in a culture of White privilege and coercive relations of power insensitive to the needs, aspirations, and expectations of First Nations. In fact, master tuition agreement negotiations occurred between provincial school board and DIAND personnel on behalf of First Nations without their direct involvement. Native involvement was never a policy priority or concern of public education system school boards or DIAND. The entire negotiation process has been inequitable, racist and discriminatory in both character and intent.

At the classroom level, the hidden curriculum is described in terms of behaviours of teachers and students and transaction between them; behaviours which enhance positive Native identity and positive self-esteem in Native children, youth and adults or erodes both Native identity and self-esteem depending upon the characteristics of the praxis of negotiations and schooling which are at work. The hidden curriculum gives direction and structure to the culture of classrooms and the overall culture of schools. Teacher expectations and perceptions of Native students are important dimensions of classroom interaction. Teacher perceptions and expectations impact on cultural identity and cultural pride of Native students. The hidden curriculum involves the unspoken values, attitudes and unofficial rules of behaviour students must learn and exhibit in order to participate successfully in school (Eggleston, 1977; Stubbs, 1976). These implied but mute elements of classroom practices in public education system schooling contain the real knowledge transmitted by the invisible curriculum and reflect the patterns of social interaction deemed appropriate and inappropriate by administrators, teachers and peers. A classroom culture of coerciveness, domination, control and oppression is always supported through a praxis of domination, control and oppression throughout different levels of a system. It is not something which occurs as an isolated situation at the classroom level. Interrelatedly, such a praxis in the public education system and public education system schools has the effect of denying Aboriginal

difference in the content and processes of curriculum. It has the effect of suppressing Aboriginal difference throughout. Similarly, the hidden curriculum of tuition agreement negotiations gives both direction and structure to the overall culture of tuition agreement schooling. If the culture of negotiations is coercive, dominating, controlling, disrespectful and oppressive to the Native people, during negotiations, then education arising out of such negotiations will also exhibit these characteristics at the school setting level. It will pervade the culture of the school.

In their interaction the Native students, teachers, principals and other school personnel should aim to maintain the integrity of Native world views, Native knowledge, Native language, Native heritage, Native pedagogy and Native culture while being attentive to the demands of excellence, equity, and relevance of bi-cultural education. All too frequently, there are patterns of differential treatment of Native students in schools of the public education system resulting in the failure to involve parents, Elders, Aboriginal scholars and other members of Native communities as active participants in school governance or in classroom and other activities of the school (Burns, 1998b, c).

Educators in the public education system need to be educated regarding the *suis generis* (see Hampton in Battiste and Barman, 1995) characteristics of Native education, as determined by the Native peoples and taught by Native people themselves. They also need to be educated regarding the characteristics of Native world views, Native knowledge, Native culture, Native heritage, Native languages, Native pedagogy, Native spirituality, Native inclusiveness in education, Native control of Native education, and Native self-determination and self-government. Native education has meant different things to different people at different points in time. At the level of the normative order, the federal government of Canada espouses a policy of Native control of Native education. Some provincial jurisdictions espouse policies and practices of Aboriginal empowerment in education. However, at the level of factual performance, Native control of Native education is a non-event. It is simply not happening. Native control of Native education is a myth within the context of current social policies and related education fiscal policies and practices which fail to empower the Native peoples in the education field. At best, Native control of Native education is frequently synonymous with opportunities to make recommendations and to administer and manage schools.

Native Inclusiveness and Relevance in Education

For thousands of years, prior to colonization, the original peoples in spiritual relationship with Mother Earth amassed and passed on to their

children and youth cumulative bodies of knowledge; knowledge which was housed in the hearts, experiences and minds of the First Peoples; knowledge which assured their existence, survival and prosperity as a distinct and unique peoples; a form of diverse schooling in which everyone was directly involved throughout the life course. The forces of internal colonialism (Welch, 1996) manifested in state level education legislation, education policies, and education practices pertaining specifically to the Aboriginal peoples remain prejudicial, racist and discriminatory. As in the case of colonial social policies which had as their ultimate goals the disposing of the Native problem, eradication of the Native people as a distinct and unique people, religious conversion, cultural genocide, and forced assimilation. First Nation/provincial school board tuition agreement schooling does not provide Aboriginal students with the knowledge and expertise needed to participate fully in the economy or knowledge, expertise and affects necessary for cultural survival. Schools are not inclusive of the Aboriginal peoples.

Recent changes at the level of the normative order of society provide the basis for Native inclusive approaches to Native education. In 1976, the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE), in the United States, provided perspective to the essence of Native inclusive education in stating that Native education means:

A method of teaching that recognizes the educational needs of Indian people as unique and offers a challenge to the educators and policy makers to redress the present inadequacy in meeting those needs... A method of teaching that revives an appreciation for Indian heritage and generates a positive self-image... educational policies should respect the wishes and the desires of the Indian people to design and manage their own educational programs... (they should have) full involvement of Indian parents and community members... (and) include the method and content of teachings which are designed and developed by Indian educators and Indian people reflecting Indian concepts and cultural values... (Indian education) is necessary because conventional education puts the Indian child at a disadvantage so far as learning is concerned... Indian concepts about humanity adds to the more conventional emphasis on technical learning skills by putting equal emphasis on universal harmony and creates a basis for deeper appreciation for life and the universe in a spiritual context... Creates in a child a positive outlook for learning new skills and knowledge... to develop the intrinsic values of an individual so that one's ability is balanced with one's apprecia-

tion and understanding (Hirschfelder and Kreipe de Montano, 1993:45).

Hampton (1988) identifies twelve elements or standards around which Aboriginal education can be meaningfully thought through and organized to include the active valuing of spirituality, service, diversity, culture, tradition, respect, history, relentlessness, vitality, conflict, place, and transformation. He provides perspective to those foundational elements in the following way:

- (*Spirituality*) the centre of which is respect for the spiritual relationship of all things, including everything taught and learned in school...;
- (*Service*) education is to serve the people...its purpose is not individual advancement status, privilege or power...within service, the individual does not form an identity in opposition to the group by responding competitively and individualistically to instructional demands, but recognizes the group as relatives who are included in individual identity...;
- (*Diversity*) respect for diversity embodied in Native education requires self-knowledge and self-respect without which respect for others is impossible...;
- (*Culture*) Native cultures have ways of thought, learning, teaching, and communicating that are different than, but of equal validity to those of non-Native cultures...the thought ways of Native culture stand at the beginning of Aboriginal time and are the foundations of the lives of Native children, youth and adults...;
- (*Tradition*) Native education maintains a continuity with tradition...traditions which define and preserve that which is Native... continuity with tradition which is neither a rejection of the traditions of other cultures nor an attempt to turn back the clock to previous moments in time... it is the continuity of living Native culture that is important to Native education, not the preservation of beliefs, values, artifacts and rituals frozen in time and space...;
- (*Respect*) Native education is based on relationships of personal respect, respect for others and respect of the environment...;
- (*History*) Native education has a sense of history and does not avoid the hard facts of colonialism and the hegemonic forces of government in the oppression of the Native peoples...;
- (*Relentlessness*) in the battle for Native children; teachers are important warriors for the life of Native children...;
- (*Vitality*) Native education recognizes and nourishes the powerful pattern of life that lies hidden within personal and tribal suffering and oppression... suffering begets strength...the Native peoples have not vanished...they continue to exist as a distinct people...;

- (*Conflict*) Native education recognizes the conflict, tensions and struggles between itself and White education as well as with education in general... western education is in content and structure hostile to the Native peoples... as currently practised, it is prejudicial, racist and discriminatory... it is a form of cultural genocide...;
- (*Place*) Native education recognizes the importance of a Native sense of place, land, and territory within the context of the past, the present and the future...; and
- (*Transformation*) a component which recognizes the need for transformation in the relation between Native and White, as well as in the individual and society... Native graduates of schools must develop the knowledge, expertise and will required to contribute to the change of the society of domination in order to be able to survive in it, to be able to earn a good living in modern society, to ensure their existence as a distinct people, and to play proactive roles in achieving Native self-determination throughout.

Hampton (see Hampton in Battiste and Barman, 1995) provides further perspective to Indian education as a dynamic of interconnections and interconnectedness in highlighting the fact that Native education is not to be driven by the concepts, ideas and methods of a monolithic model. It requires an overall process within a set of organizing principles which helps to organize and clarify thoughts, throughout. For Hampton, the six directions: spirit, earth, north, east, south and west exist as an approach to organizing and clarifying thoughts with respect to Native education, Native curriculum, Native pedagogy and Native schooling.

Aboriginal people of North and South America also have a history of using the age old symbol of the Medicine Wheel. Numerous First Nations use the term Medicine Wheel when referring to the Circle of Life, the Sacred Hoop, and so on. Since the Anishnaabe way of life is based on the learning of the Medicine Wheel, it is only logical that a Native inclusive curriculum in the public education system schools be based on teachings of the Medicine Wheel including its concepts, ideas, beliefs, meanings, values and ways of doing things. The Medicine Wheel symbol is expressed in various different ways throughout the Americas including: the grandfathers, the four seasons, the four races and the four elements (Ense, Buswa and Shawana, 1993).

What is important to draw attention to here is that Native inclusiveness and relevance in the public education system can only occur if it is based on Native world views, in an environment where Native world view is validated, valued and asserted throughout. Native thinking processes, bodies of knowledge and structures of knowledge development and trans-

mission are uniquely different from those underpinning the White western Eurocentric paradigm of education (Burns, 1998c). Relatedly, as any Native Elder or Native university-based scholar knows Aboriginal world views and western world views are in paradigmatic clash. The world corresponds to the apparatus of our thinking and one's world view structures both the subjective and objective forms of one's praxis as well as its limitations. As a result, a praxis of Native inclusiveness and relevance in the public education system is not a praxis which can be advanced by non-Native people or those who merely have some curiosity or general interest in Native issues. Non-Native motivation, good intent, curiosity and interest in Native self-determination and Native inclusiveness in tuition agreement schooling within the public education system is not a sufficient condition to achieve Native inclusiveness. Native inclusiveness and self-determination corresponds to the praxis of the Native peoples. It does not correspond to the praxis of non-Native people; a praxis whose subjective and objective realities are housed within elements of western world view.

Conclusions

In Ontario, there is a notable absence of Native inclusiveness in the policies and practices of the Ministry of Education and Training (MET). This situation, in turn, manifests itself in practices throughout the public education system. In mainstream schools, in Ontario, policies and practices of mainstream education also lack Native inclusiveness (Burns and Gamlin, 1995). This is also true with respect to policies and practices pertaining to First Nations/provincial school boards tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, tuition agreement implementation, tuition agreement schooling, and tuition agreement schooling outcomes for students (Burns, 1998a, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c), in Native studies courses and/or units of Native study (Burns, 1998b); and in the policies, membership and work of mandated school councils (Burns, 1998). As a result of this, in the Province of Ontario, equity of education access, equity of education program quality, and equity of education outcome remain widespread systemic problematics for Aboriginal students regardless as to whether those students are First Nation/provincial school board tuition agreement students or students who live off-Reserve in urban or rural communities and who attend school in the public education system.

Relatedly, education relevance, excellence, and Native inclusiveness in education remain widespread problematics for First Nations tuition agreement students attending mainstream schools, in Ontario. Inequalities produced by schools pertaining specifically to Native people are fostered, in part, by the culture of school board systems and their institutionalized

beliefs, values, norms, structures and overall programmatic and behavioural regularities which are both racist and discriminatory in character and effect. Combined, these contribute to the creation of a high incidence of alienation, grade and course repetition, suspensions, absenteeism, basic and general level placement, and dropping out of school (Common and Frost, 1994). There is a need of a praxis of Aboriginal self-determination in the public education system.

A praxis of Native self-determination and inclusiveness in First Nation/provincial school boards tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, tuition agreement implementation, tuition agreement schooling, and tuition agreement schooling results is based on a set of thirteen fundamental principles which must pervade the policies, practices and culture of provincial ministries of education, school boards, school council governance organizations, the formal and informal curriculum of school and the overall culture of schools:

- that the Native people are distinct and unique;
- that the Native people have the inherent right, constitutional right and universal right to self-determination as Aboriginal peoples and the right to Aboriginal self-government;
- that there is need for dominant society and the public education system to recognize the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Native peoples and Native world view and to celebrate and assert Aboriginal differences in the formal and informal curriculum of the school;
- that within the White western paradigm of education, ethnocentrism, attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, the denial of difference and the suppression of difference as response to the Aboriginal peoples is synonymous with racism and systemic discrimination in society and in schooling, and that these barriers to equity of education relevance, equity of program quality, excellence in education and equity of outcome must be removed;
- that the Aboriginal people want two main things from education—schools to help children, youth and adults to learn the skills they need to participate fully in the economy, and to help children develop as citizens of Aboriginal nations with the knowledge of their languages and traditions necessary for cultural continuity—and that while the public education system fails in both of these areas, these goals of education must be comprehensively addressed;
- that the Elders are the most knowledgeable people in Aboriginal societies—they are the keepers of tradition, guardians of culture, the wise people, the teachers;

- that the public education system is not invitational or inclusive of the Native peoples, has made few attempts to reach out and involve Aboriginal parents, Elders, Aboriginal scholars or the Aboriginal community in meaningful ways and lacks mechanism of accountability to the Aboriginal people;
- that Native inclusiveness and Native self-determination in the public education system is synonymous with meaningful institutional change and meaningful education change pertaining specifically to Aboriginal students;
- that there is a need for a praxis of Native inclusiveness and relevance in the wider public education process, school board jurisdictions, the profession, faculties of education, school governance organizations, schools and both the formal and informal curriculum of schools as a strategy for achieving education relevance, education excellence and education equity pertaining specifically to Aboriginal students;
- that a praxis of Native inclusiveness and Native self-determination in education is in direct contrast to a praxis of domination, control, assimilation, domestication, marginalization, denial of difference and suppression of difference;
- that those who cannot remember the past, distort the past or work toward mental amnesia concerning the past are condemned to playing proactive roles in repeating the past and sustaining its legacies;
- that First Nations/public education system tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling must take place within a system of collaborative relation of power and a praxis of self-determination, liberation and freedom; and
- that Native inclusive schooling strives to achieve Aboriginal *suis generis* characteristics and results as determined by the Native people and as delivered by Native personnel.

A praxis of tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement education is in direct contrast to a praxis of domination, control, and domestication; a form of praxis which has among its unstated goals the subtle assimilation of Native children, youth and adults into the beliefs, values, and practices of western world view and western instructional practices. There are several areas of Native inclusiveness in First Nations tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement schooling over which it is necessary for First Nations to achieve collaborative control. Each of the areas of inclusiveness underpin relevance, excellence and equity in education pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults. The various areas of inclusiveness also exist as underpinnings of the self-determination of the Native people, as a distinct and unique peoples; a people who have been

singled out for differential, racist and discriminatory treatment through state level mechanisms of cultural domination, political oppression, and economic exploitation (Wolpe, 1975); a people who have been cast in a disadvantaged position in relation to the dominant society.

The focus of effective tuition agreement negotiations is on respect and integrity; respect of the Native peoples, respect of the set of thirteen fundamental principles; and both respect for an integrity of Native world views, Native knowledge and experience, Elders, Native scholars, parents of students, members of Aboriginal communities and organizations, Native spirituality, Native languages, Native history, uniqueness of Native cultures, Native traditions, Native institutions, Native beliefs, values, attitudes and norms, and respect of the special relationship of Native peoples to their land and resources. This overall approach to Native inclusiveness in education takes into account significant facts of genuine educational inclusion in several distinct but interrelated areas of both the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum of the school including curricular and instructional practices, organization practices, linguistic practices, practices pertaining to Native personnel equity, the culture of the school, school and community relations and involvement, student achievement outcome and other interactional, social, management and organizational aspects of teaching, learning and the environment of the school. Native inclusiveness in tuition agreement negotiations has several interrelated goals including Native control of Native education, Native self-determination in tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement education; and education relevancy, education excellence and education equity pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults.

A Native inclusive praxis of tuition agreement negotiations comprises a process of open, honest dialogue; critical reflection; and self-determining cultural action leading to needed institutional change and needed educational change. The purpose of a praxis of freedom, a praxis of empowerment, a praxis of Native self-determination, a praxis of Native relevance and inclusiveness is to act upon the world of public education to change it. First Nations/provincial school boards tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement education achieved through a praxis of Native self-determination and inclusiveness is an important element of Native control of Native education within the public education system context where tuition agreement education within the public education system is a preferred education option of First Nations. This is notwithstanding the fact that First Nations ought to consider an entire world of alternative arrangements when it comes to the issue of social arrangements for education pertaining specifically to Native children, youth and adults. In

the final analysis, if the tuition agreement negotiating process fails to achieve new consciousness in the public education system; if the tuition agreement fails to serve as an effective instrument for bringing about meaningful change in the culture of tuition agreement schooling; and if their combined effort fails to provide education and schooling which has helped Native children, youth and adults learn the skills needed to participate fully in the economy and to simultaneously develop as citizens of Aboriginal nations with the full knowledge and understanding of their language and traditions necessary for self-determination, self-government and cultural survival—then the overall praxis of tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement schooling in the public education system continues to fail the Aboriginal students; and, as is frequently the case in the Eurocentric western paradigm of education, “plus ça change, plus ça change pas!”

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Notes

1. In Canada, there are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal peoples exist as a distinct peoples who are considered separately from racial and ethno cultural minorities comprising the non-Aboriginal dimensions of Canadian society. Within that distinctiveness, “Aboriginal” includes Status Indians, non-Status Indians, Inuit and Métis. As numerous reference materials and people use the term “Native”, “Aboriginal” and “Native” are used interchangeably in this paper. “First Nations” refers to those Aboriginal peoples registered as Indians under the provision of the Indian Act.
2. The Ontario Native Employment Equity Circle (ONEEC) exited as a Native development and support circle in the Ontario Public Service (OPS). Its Native membership provided collective advice on Native issues through the workings of an advisory committee to senior management throughout the OPS. The membership met minimally

yearly in self-determined conference settings where issues and concerns of Native peoples in the OPS were discussed and strategies recommended for addressing them. Shortly after being elected, the neo-conservative Harris government cancelled the funding directed towards ONEEC infrastructure of support. As a result, ONEEC was disbanded and Native members no longer had a formal organization in which they could meet, within the OPS, as a group. As a result of this, ONEEC no longer exists. The forces of internal colonialism continue to grind. The neo-conservative government appears not to view or respect the sons and daughters of the First Peoples as a distinct and unique peoples in Canadian society; they are expected to integrate and assimilate into the mainstream, non-Native culture of the OPS, institutions, publicly funded agencies, and society. In Ontario, the neo-conservative government does not celebrate the Aboriginal people as a group or aspire to create legislation, policies or institutional practices resulting in equity, social justice and due process of involvement pertaining specifically to Aboriginal peoples. Suffice it to point out here that, within the White Eurocentric paradigm or institution ethnocentricism, attitudes of cultural and racial superiority, the denial of difference and the suppression of differences as responses to the Aboriginal peoples is synonymous with racism and systemic discrimination.

3. While I acknowledge Eurocentric factors of colonialism, internal colonialism and conquest; I think it important to point out that the First Peoples do not exist as a defeated people. In Canada, United States, Australia, and New Zealand, the First Peoples have been the victims of the political forces of colonialism and internal colonization. However, as a distinct and unique peoples, they have never been defeated. They continue to exist as a distinct and unique peoples with distinct and unique world views and sovereign rights to be recognized in perpetuity. It is worth noting that Aboriginal self-determination in Australia is particularly languid. Australia is a country in which Aboriginal Australians do not have any treaty rights whatsoever. To this very day, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia strive to achieve equal citizenship without the benefit of treaty rights with the state.

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