

# Editorial

Frank Deer

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The First Nations education movement in Canada, one that has its roots in socio-political developments of the early 1970s, continues to develop as a legitimate feature of Canadian education; an essential component of First Nations education in Canada is post-secondary education. First Nations students in Canada have experienced some progress in the acquisition of a post-secondary degree or diploma in the last four decades. Hull (2004) showed that the rate of acquisition of a post-secondary degree or diploma for First Nations peoples increased 5% from 1986 to 1996. Vermaeten, Norris, and Buchmeier (2004) showed that the proportion of First Nations peoples in British Columbia who have acquired some form of post-secondary education increased from 18% to 24% from 1996 to 2001. Frideres and Gadacz (2008) reported that the number of First Nations peoples enrolled in post-secondary education in Canada has increased from less than 5000 in 1975 to more than 20000 by 2004. These developments can be encouraging if one considers that the acquisition of post-secondary education by First Nations peoples may be essential to the progress of the First Nations education movement in Canada – essential in order to enact localized educational programming that can facilitate language retention and traditional ways of learning. To further the progress of First Nations education in Canada, many post-secondary institutions have established professorial positions and bona fide academic departments for the study of Indigenous education, of which First Nations education is a constituent part.

First Nations education in Canada, supported in large part by the increased number of First Nations post-secondary graduates, is not a static field of study and practice. The relatively new forums of formal and informal discussion on First Nations education where innovative theories, perspectives, epistemologies, and ontologies are posed and debated have required the establishment of publications and symposia that provide appropriate, safe environments in which such discussions can be situated. The recently established *Canadian Association for the Study of Indigenous Education*, a new

scholarly association of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, joins a growing assembly of publications, conferences, working groups, and networks that serve the field of Indigenous education. Although there are still many challenges, some positive developments have cultivated a sense of hope for First Nations education in Canada.

This second volume of *First Nations Perspectives: The Journal of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre* reflects some of the positive developments that have characterized contemporary First Nations education in recent years. Exploring such areas as Indigenous knowledge, traditional pedagogical techniques, and cultural sensitivity in research, it is my hope that professionals and students from all areas of education can benefit from the contents of this volume.

At a recent awards ceremony for Indigenous educators, I had the pleasure to witness the recognition of numerous teachers, researchers, administrators, role-models, and mentors for their contributions to Indigenous education in Manitoba. This ceremony, which was resplendent with traditional music performances and presentations based on ancestral ideals and mores, embodied a palpable feeling of community. During these proceedings, it occurred to me that a great deal of the award recipients were younger people – young educators who have selected a career that situates them in the day-to-day challenges of First Nations education. These young educators, from my perspective, represent the change agents responsible for facilitating the advancement of First Nations education over the coming decades. It is their efforts that resonate in my mind while I edit this volume.

*Kiinawind giii nisododaamin giiginamagaawewiin bego jüigikendamin andii gagiiwondajüwiing, giigidowiininanan tago gagi ijii depwetamowat miwüija anishinabe. Gaagina gegoo ga anoogaadaming noongoom wasa jii ijii inigowiin tako onjii niigan gawii anii bimüwidaiwat ijii nüigan.*

*Kaisinistotamak kiskinawmakawin nenan ininiwuk nitisiwapatenan aniee betwanak kekona kitakikiskinawmaniwaki, inninimowin mena kitakikiskinawmaniwak, akwa mina kaisitapwaytakak nimosompunanuk otey kayas. Annoch kinanow okiskinawmakewuk ekwaniokewkwana poko kita pimotaak kisasin kawesk kiwikiskinomowanawuk kitiniminawuk akwa mina aniki kawiatinikanicik otey nikanik.*

## REFERENCES

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