

Indigenizing the Curriculum: An Appendix of Films and Movies, and their Supportive Books

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Online Resource

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<http://aboriginalcurriculum.ca/pdfs/movies-complete.pdf>

This work, following its initial introduction, is an evolving annotated bibliography that encompasses a wide range of Aboriginal films and movies and, where available, books (both text and audio) that the films or movies are based on, or that supplement the films or movies. While the print version contained within the *First Nations Perspectives* journal includes only the introduction, the on-line version, available at www.aboriginalcurriculum.ca (under the heading Resources), includes the entirety of the document; that is, the introduction as well as the reviews for all the films, movies, and accompanying books. The resource is primarily intended for the use of schools, universities, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In schools and universities, films and movies can be purposefully integrated into curricular outcomes, with work to activate the learning and the inclusion of applying activities following the film or movie. In Aboriginal communities, in support groups, and in non-Aboriginal settings, films and movies can be an important resource for knowledge acquisition, and thus can serve as a springboard for dialogue in the healing journey, for everyone. The annotated bibliography entries within the on-line document are intended to serve as a beginning point. Teachers and community workers are encouraged to screen all films and movies twice, while also undertaking additional research so that they can construct valuable learning activities and opportunities for dialogue that are particular to their situation.

INTRODUCTION

The motivation for this work evolved from a major SSHRC/CURA grant. In 2005 we began our work on a project entitled *Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives: Implementation and Evaluation*, with one million dollars in funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Community-University Research Alliance

(SSHRC/CURA) initiative. Our program involved efforts to integrate more Aboriginal culture into school curricula, with regular collaboration among the participating schools and community knowledge keepers as they worked as in-school artist-educators. As our work progressed, we also found that we needed to focus on integrating much more Aboriginal literature. We developed an Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Centre on campus, and provided support for our grant's participating First Nations schools, as well as for teacher candidates and visiting teachers from other schools. Over time, we extended our literature to include other culturally-relevant resources, like posters, puppets, puzzles, figurines, and games, as well as curriculum documents and other supportive resources from many organizations and jurisdictions. As well, I began to research and become familiar with Aboriginal films and movies, and we expanded that collection, as well.

The use of films and movies taps into different ways of knowing. There has been much written about multiple intelligences, or various ways of knowing and learning. Howard Gardner's (1983/2011) ground breaking work suggested that there were more than verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, that in fact there were musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences, as well as naturalistic and experiential intelligences. Daniel Goldman's (1995/2005) work on emotional intelligence is also significant. In other words, we have different ways of living and moving in the world and integrating its teachings. The use of films and movies allows teachers to diversify instruction for students. As well, because learning reaches automaticity, or a level of deeper metacognitive understanding, with some repetition, the use of films and movies allows for that focus, but with a different learning strategy; thus, the repetition does not actually seem repetitive or boring, and so students remain engaged with their learning. The learning from a film or movie may be more likely to reach the stage of emotional learning, and thus students may tap into a level of understanding beyond the concept of intellectual knowing. As well, because the films and movies tell a story, if the aspects that students are to learn involve a challenge to their current ways of thinking, a film or movie can allow students to more gently tease out, become aware of, question, and then address their own biases. Accompanying literature and audio books also help in that process, as they allow for an appreciation of different ways of viewing the world, and of living one's life.

On a final note, the use of films and movies is, for the most part, currently incompatible with the way schools and universities structure their class time in short blocks. That is a major drawback, as there may not be time to view the film or movie in its entirety at one sitting, and there may also be little time for crucial immediate and follow-up dialogue. Opportunities for incubatory dialogue are needed as well, where students can continue to explore their learning from the film or movie. The use of films and movies may be discouraged if the school and the teacher are more focused on quickly accomplished 'sound-bite' objectives rather than the deeper learning that can be mentored with the use of films and movies. Support for change is necessary from schools, universities, and communities if Aboriginal films and movies are to serve us well during the healing journey.

REFERENCES

- Gardner, Howard. (1983/2011) *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goldman, Daniel. (1995/2005). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.

