

Building on reflective practice: becoming real aboriginal teachers

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Building on Reflective Practice: Becoming 'real' Aboriginal teachers

Becoming 'real' Aboriginal teachers: attending to intergenerational narrative reverberations and responsibilities The article written by Young, et al. (2010) proffered issues pertinent to the narrated stories on the experiences of six Aboriginal teachers: Brenda, Mary, Jennifer, Jerri-Lynn, Khea, Lucy and Lulu as they pursued higher education in Canada and delved into research work. The terms 'intergenerational narrative reverberations' were used repeatedly throughout the article to indicate stories told of each teacher's cultural, historical, and social experiences that shaped their personal and professional development. In this reading, I learned of the different challenges that Aboriginal teachers experience in current time, despite the encouragement of the educational institutions to support equality and diversity in culture. It has provided an eye-opener opportunity to reflect on how I treat others, students and colleagues, who come from another culture, ethnic group, or people with different demographical background from mine. The remarkable comments noteworthy of the author's contentions were the discriminations felt by the teachers against White people. Her comments made me think of the way I interact with people from other race or culture. I admit that there is a tendency to think and feel that White people are classified of superior race; and society has in fact responded to this typecast since the olden times. One teacher's perception of prejudice encompassed being discriminated by their own Aboriginal people as the teachers were classified as 'not fitting' in any world, further rendering their own respective families as 'not normal'. This is more difficult, especially for educators, who wanted to belong to the academic group to teach students the concept of equality, justice, freedom

of expression and human rights when we, ourselves, have tendencies to bypass people from minority groups or those who come from other cultural orientation. I admit that it is disappointing to realize that by not doing anything about this, one is actually being indifferent to the challenges and difficulties that these people (Aboriginal teachers) encounter. More profoundly revealed were the perceived inequality in terms of having no permanent contracts given to Aboriginal teachers; no allocated classroom space; stereotyping schools that encourage the participation and attendance of Aboriginal students and teachers as 'not as strong', 'not as good', or 'not as qualified'. Through their stories, as revealed through their points of views and narrated professionally through their perspectives, the aim was to reveal the continued experience of "being excluded or silenced by dominant historical, institutional and social narratives positioning them as not 'real teachers'" (Young, et al., June 2010, p. 288). The authors have been successful in relaying to the readers the discrimination being applied and by not doing anything constructive or positive about this, I, as an educator, am guilty of assessing others as not equal or competent or qualified like the rest. I believe that the authors effectively relayed oppression that, sadly, continues to be imposed by society, specifically coming from a sector (the academe) that is expected to possess the knowledge and understanding of practicing equality in instructions and treatment. Through the points of views of Aboriginal teachers who, despite these challenges and odds, remained determined and persistent to improve their craft and hone their personal and professional skills, their stories now become part of the education's history acknowledging the responsibilities of the academic community to recognize

the need to change for the better. In this regard, the reading was instrumental in making one recognize that there are indeed, vast challenges and trials that teachers should overcome, especially those whose commitment and pursuit for higher learning is considered their priority, among others. However, as a teacher, each and everyone must embrace the fact that through diversity (in ethnic, culture, demographic background), one is given more opportunities to learn and be enriched from the experiences of others. Reference Young, M., Chester, J.-L., Flett, B. M., Joe, L., Marshall, L., Moore, D., et al. (June 2010). Becoming 'real' Aboriginal teachers: attending to intergenerational narrative reverberations and responsibilities. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice* , Volume 16, Number 3, 285-305.