

**Review of *Teaching Each Other: Nehinuw Concepts & Indigenous Pedagogies*. Goulet, L.M. & Goulet, K.N. (2014). Vancouver: UBC Press. 248 pgs.**

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Keith and Linda Goulet are pioneers of advancing teaching methodology in education in Northern Saskatchewan. Keith is a Cree from Cumberland House who practices the Aboriginal ways of learning and knowing and Linda is a Euro-Canadian educator who grew up in rural and urban Saskatchewan.

Goulet and Goulet (2014) introduce and support pedagogy that is based on Indigenous theory and practice. "[E]ffective teaching for Indigenous students is about relationships and connections - that is, relationships between teacher and student, among students in the class, and connections to the content and process of learning" (p.78). Indigenous education encompasses both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers with the intent of nurturing and bringing out the best in their students. It incorporates a commitment to both the students and the community. Moreover, it is the connections made with the land, language and culture and with the support of the local Elders. Lastly, it is about engaging learners and helping each other in this process. The book's title captures the central thesis of reciprocal teaching and learning with the local Indigenous culture.

Teaching Each Other emphasizes the importance of looking at best practices to meet the needs of Indigenous students by

examining the educator's relationships with the students, communities and parents. This emphasis on the Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching methodologies is intertwined with Cree words throughout the book. The Cree words impart a more profound meaning that contributes to Indigenizing pedagogy and assists educators by providing a model they can utilize to enhance their ways of teaching that is best suited to Indigenous learners. Examples of Cree words are: Nehinuw (Cree), "wagootowin (relatives), weechihitowin (supporting and helping each other), weechiseechigemitowin (alliances for common action), and ewwchiyauguneetowin (partnerships)" (p.69). The Nehinuw value of support and help for one another and kinship alliances for collective action are some of the strategies to create stronger relationships within the school and community learning settings.

Goulet and Goulet advocate for bridging the learner and educator by using the teaching strategies of the Nehinuw way of life. The Eurocentric ways are adequately providing inclusive curriculum content to Indigenous learners. A major push to decolonize and move towards the empowerment of both the student and educator which is based on Nehinuw concepts and values. This is done by providing a model of effective teaching for Indigenous students. The model the Goulets present on page 87 has four sections or quadrants: Connection to process (culturally responsive learning environment), connection to content (culturally meaningful knowledge construction), relationship with the student (culturally affirming interpersonal relationships), and relationships among students (respectful social systems). Teachers are encouraged to deliver content and employ Indigenous strategies and the Indigenous worldview to build personal power, not to dominate but to equip the learners.

Throughout the book, the authors provide examples of northern educators who are successful with incorporating Indigenous methodologies to enhance their teaching techniques. This includes the land, language, culture and the use of Elders and knowledge keepers. For example, Lily McKay Carrier is a principal of a Prekindergarten to Grade 12 school in Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. She and her team implemented a bilingual Cree-English program for Kindergarten to Grade three based on Elders' stories and input. This strengthened the bond between the community and school and, in turn, the ties to the culture and language to help the students to "understand where they come from in order to know where they are going" (p.49). A second example is that of Cheryl Morin, a Woodland Cree from Pelican Narrows who used the land as a classroom. She states that "Knowing our place in the interconnected realm of life also helps us to appreciate the benefits of using the land wisely as we learn to understand the consequences of not keeping our practice or attitudes in harmony with all other living things" (p.183). The importance of being on the land is part of Indigenizing the classroom with the inclusion of Aboriginal ways of learning and knowing. It would be of great value to provide Teaching Each *Other* to new and seasoned teachers. It would encourage them to re-evaluate their own teaching styles and thought processes and incorporate an Indigenous framework in the education they provide. It provides a model for professional development for teachers to become more knowledgeable and gain valuable teaching practices to best meet the students' learning needs.

A strength of this book is that it gives a comprehensive summary of the history of the colonization towards the Indigenous people and the authors offer hope to overcome the negative impact by sharing valuable ways to indigenize the learning. This is accomplished by helping each other, working together, putting

action into the process, building alliances and connections to the learning content and between teachers and students, and promoting Indigenous thinking. In addition, Goulet and Goulet are looking to change the praxis to be based on Nehinuw (Cree) culture. They have a gift for simplifying the pedagogy; it is a good starting point for educators in the quest to indigenize education. Furthermore, it allows for non-Indigenous educators to look beyond their current Euro-centric teaching styles and incorporate Aboriginal ways of learning and knowing.

A gap in this book is a consideration for the social-emotional, gender and sexual identity of students within the Indigenous community and schools. The material in *Teaching Each Other* could easily accommodate critical theory and, more specifically, queer pedagogy and ways educators can address these types of student needs by breaking down the structures that are in place with the application of the Nehinuw (Cree) worldview. By queer pedagogy, I refer to going beyond the constructed social norms and breaking down of colonial systems that are dominant in our school systems. It is an awareness and thought process that needs to be addressed by and for educators. Russell, Sarick and Kennelly (2002) address this need within the context of environmental education and state “[f]or Luhman (1998), one of the primary goals of queer pedagogy becomes, then, the identification and undermining of ‘the very processes by which (some) subjects become normalized and others marginalized’” (p.58). Goulet and Goulet emphasize relationships and social belonging; perhaps, this is where queering would fit in?

I enjoyed reading this book as it validated my worldview as an Indigenous scholar. I am an advocate and have a passion for my culture and language from an Indigenous worldview and perspective

but will also be a bridge between the two worlds. Moreover, I would label myself as a respectful, persistent, and accommodating advocate to heal the systemic inter-generational trauma caused by colonization. The book is written in first person narrative that allows the readers to be more engaged with the content. The authors include pictures and stories of northern educators that foster connections and reader engagement and validate the Aboriginal ways of learning as it is relational and visual.

In closing, this book can be used a reference point with the models that Goulet and Goulet present to enhance learning. I recommend that this book be included in teaching programs as a tool to build a foundation to upcoming educators.

## References

Russell, C.L., Sarick, T., & Kennelly, J. (2002). Queering environmental education. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 7(1), 54-66.

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