Leadership for Change in Teacher Education: voices of Canadian Deans of Education presents a rich sampling of diverse perspectives on the topic in a unique collection of reflections contributed by Canadian deans of education. The focus of the inquiry, “What would we hear from deans of education invited to share their perspectives on leadership for change in contemporary teacher education?” invited deans of education to reflect on the research, policies and practices currently informing their leadership. The results, fourteen engaging and provocative essays, offer important insights and increased understandings of the complex nature of their work and explore concerns raised in relation to lived experience and the multi-faceted processes of leading change for teacher education in contemporary contexts. Reflections in these short essays underscore the critical role of deans in provoking, supporting and championing new ideas and approaches to pedagogy for teacher education, and make clear the complexities inherent in leading the change. The Coda highlights the limited scope of related research available in the current literature and recommends urgent attention, in both research and practice, to the preparation of deans and support for their ongoing professional learning and sustainable leadership.

This book will be of great interest to scholars, deans of education, teacher educators, university administrators and other policymakers.

“Leadership for Change was a catalyst to immersing myself in this book, promising as it does the “Voices of Canadian Deans of Education”. A member of the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) for over a decade, I have been honoured to join these voices around many conference tables and other informal sessions. The promise of important insights these voices can share is fulfilled within every one of the compelling chapters. The book reminds us of the diverse geographical, political, and theoretical contexts that enhance understandings of multiple perspectives on leadership and the complex educational challenges inherent in contemporary teacher education. A deep commitment to public education and a profound work ethic towards stellar, relevant teacher education resonates across the work of these deans of education. This thought-provoking book makes a valuable contribution to the literature on reconceptualising leadership for teacher education.” – Professor Fern Snart, Dean of Education, University of Alberta
Leadership for Change in Teacher Education
Leadership for Change in Teacher Education
Voices of Canadian Deans of Education

Edited by

Susan E. Elliott-Johns
Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword vii
Clare Kosnik

Acknowledgements xi

Leadership for Change in Contemporary Teacher Education: Why a Focus on the Role of Deans of Education? 1
Susan E. Elliott-Johns

1. Together Today for Society’s Future: Indigenous Teacher Education in the Yukon 7
Deborah Bartlette

2. The Impact of Differentiation on Teacher Education in Ontario 13
Fiona Blaikie

Laurent Cammarata, Martine Cavanagh & Yvette d’Entremont

3a. Restructuring the Teacher Education Program at the Campus Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta: The Importance of the Role of Academic Leaders 25
Laurent Cammarata, Martine Cavanagh & Yvette d’Entremont

4. Exploring Complexities of Leadership for Teacher Education 31
Heather E. Duncan

5. Reflections on Change Leadership in a Faith-based Teacher Education Program 37
Kimberly Franklin

Rosetta Khalideen

7. Teachers Who Live in Glass Houses Should Not Throw Stones: A Call for Urgent Reform of University Teacher Education 49
Jane E. Lewis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>New Technologies and Leadership Challenges for Teacher Education</td>
<td>Kris Magnusson</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Walking the Tightrope: Staying Upright in Turbulent Times</td>
<td>David Mandzuk</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reflecting and Acting on Reflection and Action: Mobilizing Teacher Education for Social Justice</td>
<td>Ken W. McCluskey</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Working against the Grain: Leadership for 21st Century Teacher Education</td>
<td>James McNinch</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Challenge and Complexity in Landscapes of Change: Building Effective Partnerships</td>
<td>Jacqueline Muldoon</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Leading from Within</td>
<td>Karen Roland</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teacher Educator and Dean: Challenges, Joys, Trials and Successes</td>
<td>Ann Sherman</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coda: Insights Gleaned from the Voices of Deans in Education</td>
<td>Susan E. Elliott-Johns</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>About the Contributors</td>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher education is a complex process. It is even more demanding in a country like Canada that has a rich and diverse population, two official languages, schools in urban, rural, and remote areas, and Aboriginal communities with specific needs. If we are to serve the needs of our unique communities there is truly not a one-size-fits-all teacher education program. Leadership for Change in Teacher Education: Voices of Canadian Deans of Education is a wonderful collection of essays that provides many examples of strong teacher education programs where student teachers are prepared for both their local contexts and for the global education community.

Although written many years ago, Ducharme and Ducharme’s (1996) observation still holds true that teacher education programs and faculty are viewed as “both the cause of all school problems and the source of many of its solutions” (p. 705). In this period of hyper-criticism of education, schools of education have come under unrelenting inspection by many stakeholders. However, the sheer complexity of teacher education is often not fully appreciated. For example, Goodwin and Kosnik (2013) contend: “Simply put, it is reasonable to assume that quality teacher preparation depends on quality teacher educators” (p. 334). However, the quality of teacher preparation also depends on the leadership of the school of education. An individual teacher educator no matter how charismatic, knowledgeable, and hard working cannot do it all, because becoming a teacher is not a straight-forward process. In order for student teachers to acquire the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they need for effective teaching they must be immersed in an entire teacher education program, one with a clear vision of good teaching and an understanding of the process of becoming a teacher. Deans of education play a pivotal role in establishing these conditions; through their leadership they help faculty shape the school’s vision, develop programs to match it, and continually revise the program to ensure they are meeting the needs of the many stakeholders. The impact of the dean on students and faculty cannot be underestimated.

Leadership is demanding anyway but is made ever more so in our increasingly politicized context. The criticisms of teacher education programs abound and it is often the deans who are the “face” of the institution. They are required to respond to seemingly never-ending demands. Ironically, deans of education as individuals are often overlooked in the rush to improve education, implement mandates, shore up sagging finances, attend to the concerns of stakeholders, and on and on. Susan Elliott-Johns recognized this void in the literature which led to her compiling and
editing *Leadership for Change in Teacher Education: Voices of Canadian Deans of Education*. This is a laudable goal which she fulfilled admirably by presenting a unique text that provides insider’s stories of the work of deans of education. This collection of essays highlights the work of 14 highly committed individuals all of whom are working in demanding situations. Giving them a voice deepens our understanding of the complexity of leading a school of education and adds another piece of the “puzzle” of teacher education.

In the midst of public critiques of education, deans of education are charged with guiding their faculty and students through the choppy waters of competing demands and unrealistic expectations. This is not an easy task and it is made all the more difficult because we so often think of deans as just administrators but they are so much more. How do we get a sense of them? Aidan Chambers (1985) notes that, “storying … defines humanity and makes us human” (p. 3). He observes “in one way or another we tell ourselves and each other stories about life” (p. 4). Stories are powerful because they engage the reader in ways that typical and traditional academic literature does not. Against the backdrop of a highly politicized educational context I found the deans’ stories in this volume compelling; by including both personal and professional stories they gave me a sense of the individuals—their struggles, their joys, their challenges, and their personal goals. By bringing together many threads of their lives the stories gave me a peek behind the scenes.

I was struck by the hopeful tone of each author. Although they recount a crushing workload with much of their work invisible there is an optimism present in each essay. These veteran educators have seen it all in their careers yet they have not lost their love for education or their sense of hope. Throughout the chapters it is clear that these deans are not settling for the “just a program,” approach; they are aiming for great programs—high achievement by students, productive faculty, and a healthy relationship with neighbouring communities. Yes these are lofty goals, but the essays here include many examples of innovations actually implemented in their programs to meet the challenges of teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. It is clearly evident that they care deeply about their faculty and students. Their caring stance and outstanding leadership skills lend further support to Ducharme and Ducharme’s claim that teacher educators can provide solutions to problems of education. This compelling text sheds light on unsung heroes of education whose work is making a difference. I know I will never again think of a dean as just an administrator!

REFERENCES


FOREWORD


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Leadership for Change in Teacher Education is the result of a collaborative writing project with deans of education across Canada—all of whom carved out precious time in their already busy professional lives to contribute reflections on the topic and to provoke further thinking about contemporary leadership for teacher education and change. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with all of these colleagues, from coast to coast, as the project took shape.

I would like to thank all the authors who so generously agreed to share their collective wisdom, insights and lived experiences. The ongoing investments of time, energy, expertise and passion for leadership, learning and teaching resonate throughout the authentic voices captured in this text. I am also very grateful for everyone’s patience and tenacity throughout the writing process: Enthusiasm for, and engagement in, the project never waned. This too was much appreciated—and essential to completion of the project. Thank you for all of your support, encouragement, and shared passion for teacher education, leadership and change.

Special thanks must also go to Teri-Ann McDonald whose meticulous attention to detail was invaluable during the final preparation of the manuscript.

Last but not least, my sincere thanks are extended to family, friends and colleagues who, in ways too numerous to mention here, all continue to sustain what has become my life’s work: teacher education research and practice.

Susan E. Elliott-Johns
LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY TEACHER EDUCATION

Why a Focus on the Role of Deans of Education?

The post-secondary education sector is currently experiencing significant transition and change as technological innovation, financial constraints, and shifting demographics (to name but a few significant factors) continue to create climates of uncertainty and precarity. While governments, university leaders, and other stakeholders expound the need for positive change, in the face of current uncertainties, it is often difficult to move ahead without reliable input from sector participants. Furthermore, it seems, input is often deemed hard to obtain or not sought out at all.

Being part of this post-secondary landscape, faculties of education across Canada (and around the world) are also engaged in significant transitions and change as the expectations for, and understandings of, teacher education and the teaching profession experience intense scrutiny and increasing commentary under the banner “teacher education reform.” Educational change, including teacher education change, is political, multi-faceted, and uncertain; bringing about change also takes time and skilled leadership. The purpose of this book was to invite, compile and publish a collection of brief but engaging and provocative essays from deans of education across Canada, in order to share their ideas and perspectives on leadership for change in contemporary teacher education. Taken separately, each essay in this unique collection explores critical issues and offers rich insights relevant to navigating the complex demands of leadership for 21st century teacher education. Collectively, the essays present an illuminating collage of insider’s voices on a topic that has a very limited profile in the literature.

As leaders, deans of education must mediate between administration and faculty and, as a result, are called upon to wear many hats daily. For example, in addition to responsibilities for academic leadership and scholarship, “hats” worn may include administrative manager, resource coordinator, community builder, fundraiser, mentor, team builder et al. Very few studies looking at the “leadership journeys” of deans of education (Bowen, 1995) have been undertaken, and Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Sarros (1999) wrote, “The academic deanship is the least studied and most misunderstood position in the academy.” This situation does not appear to have changed very much almost fifteen years later. A comprehensive search of current literature revealed very few relevant citations beyond those of Cole, Elijah, and Knowles (1998), Jackson (2000), and Gmelch.
(2002)—and, it should be noted, all of these were published more than a decade ago. As John Loughran (2014) writes, “Because teacher education is ubiquitous and an integral component of education systems world-wide, concentration on the organization of teacher education has overshadowed the development of deeper understandings of those that work within the system” (p. vii). While Loughran is referring primarily to teacher educators here, the voices of deans of education (who frequently, if not always, possess background as teacher educators and provide leadership in faculties of teacher education), might also offer insights and deepen understandings about the nature of their “work within the system.” Specific aspects of the role of the dean pertaining to management and leadership for change in teacher education comprise the focus of all contributed essays in this volume.

Therefore, this project sought to surface current insights from responses to the following question from multiple perspectives and locations across Canada: In the current era of teacher education reform, what kinds of lived experience might deans of education share to assist others in understanding their role as leaders of teacher education and change? In other words, what does it mean to be a dean of education in the 21st century? What can be learned by listening to the voices of deans of education in terms of better understanding the nature of their work in relation to leadership for teacher education, especially in the current context of significant transitions, change, and uncertainty?

As leaders of change in university contexts where initial teacher education takes place, deans of education have considerable capacity to inform and enhance the discourse on teacher education change and, I believe, it is essential that their voices are heard. Using an *emic* (or insider) perspective approach to draw on “behavior or beliefs that are meaningful for the participant” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 12), these essays offer increased understandings of a range of perspectives on leadership for contemporary teacher education, and the research, practice, pedagogy, and institutional change currently informing (and, at times, driving) the leadership of the sixteen contributing authors.

Malone’s (2013) work, *Leading Educational Change: Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform*, provoked further reflection on leadership for change in teacher education. A recurring notion was how very seldom we actually seem to hear from deans of education on prevalent “big picture” issues (other than, perhaps, our own dean, if we happen to work in a faculty of education?) In the present geo-political climate, there are probably many reasons why this is the case. However, the omission of such knowledgeable “voices from the field” (in their capacity as teacher educators and leaders of teacher education) not only from the public domain, but also from crucial systemic decision-making processes, is becoming increasingly problematic—particularly when decisions being made will continue to have long-lasting implications for teacher education, teacher educators, teachers, and, by association, their students. Where, I wondered, were the research conversations interrogating fundamental and complex changes related to teacher education reform currently being experienced in faculties of education all across Canada? Conversations that include the voices of deans of education?
Another catalyst in the conceptualizing of this project was a recent article in a professional journal, entitled “Deans Speak Out” (Pitt, Dibbon, Sumara, & Wiens, 2014). In this article, four deans of education from across the country were asked to comment on changes in 21st century teacher education in relation to meeting the teaching and learning demands of this new century. Each of the deans responded quite differently to the question of how faculties of education should respond to changes in the profession of teaching through their pre-service programs. As I read, I found myself thinking I’d like to hear much more on this topic—and to have an opportunity to “listen in” on the voices of other deans of education too. Consequently, the central goal of this project became a focus on the voices of leaders from faculties of education across Canada: making available valuable insights from their shared reflections on, for example, vision(s) for contemporary teacher education; complexities inherent in their leadership roles; pedagogy and practice for teacher education; pressing internal and external conditions (including incessant calls for accountability); collaboration and continuous engagement with all stakeholders.

While related in terms of the common enterprise of educating students and teachers, in reality, school systems and faculties of education operate in different situated contexts. That said, understanding educational change as “inevitably a political process that has a tendency to be episodic, driven by external policies, susceptible to electoral cycles, and reactive to outside pressures” (Malone, 2013, p. 129) appears to be increasingly as relevant to faculties of education today as it is to the school systems where graduates of teacher education will apply to teach. Broadly speaking, educational change, including teacher education change, is undoubtedly political, multi-faceted, uncertain; it takes time, skilled leadership, and, furthermore:

- positive educational change is possible when it is embedded in a clear vision, strong leadership, resource investment, internal and external accountability, high-quality practice, collaboration, and continuous engagement by all stakeholders. (Malone, 2013, p. 2)

The question thus became, “What would we hear from deans of education invited to share their perspectives on leadership for change in contemporary teacher education?” This collection of essays is the result of pursuing answers to that very question. Inspired by Malone’s challenge to other global leaders in education, I invited leaders of faculties of education from across Canada to reflect on the research, policies and practices currently informing leadership and change in teacher education. I, too, asked them to encapsulate their thinking by writing a brief essay of approximately 2000 words. In essence, participants were asked to contribute to a forum that would share reflections on questions related to five broad themes relevant to the topic under study. More specifically, the deans were asked to respond in relation to their own situated leadership for contemporary teacher education. The five broad themes were presented in the initial invitation as the following guiding questions:
SUSAN E. ELLIOTT-JOHNS

- What critical issues, research, and current ways of thinking about teaching, learning and pedagogy for teacher education inform your leadership of a faculty of education?
- What are the most important external/internal conditions and inherent tensions encountered in your work?
- What insights can you share about the ways contemporary thinking about teacher education and change are reflected in pre-service programs at your current location?
- What important changes, transitions, transformations are you experiencing in leadership for teacher education?
- What is your vision for teacher education, going forward?

Fourteen completed essays resulted from the many prompt and positive responses received from deans of education, literally, from coast to coast. Several leaders immediately embraced the opportunity and committed to contributing an essay on the topic. In fact, the proposed project generated considerable excitement and enthusiasm in my in-box. For example:

Hello Susan,

Thank-you for your invitation. As I complete my 6 year tenure as Dean of Education, this exercise will provide me a golden opportunity to reflect on critical issues of Leadership in and the changing landscape of teacher education. I will have an abstract to you by the end of the month. This seems like a wonderful project ….

Good morning, Susan.

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to such an interesting collection. I will have an abstract to you by the 21st as requested.

Hello Susan,

I am very interested in this opportunity and will do my best to get an abstract to you by February 21. I am not only passionate about this topic, I think I have led through some “interesting times” and circumstances at (***) that maybe provide me with some thoughts, and insight on this …. I share all of this precisely because I think it provides me with insights to some of the questions posed ….

It sounds like a great project. Even if I don’t participate, I will read this with interest!

Dear Susan,

Thanks for the invitation to submit an essay for publication in your edited text. I think a book of the nature you are proposing is timely granted the changing [and chaotic] landscape of teacher education and education in general. I would be pleased to write an essay and just need to further
contemplate what my focus will be. I will try to send you the abstract by the required deadline.

All busy people, these four (and many other deans) grasped the challenge right away and made time in their hectic schedules to meet rigorous expectations and tight timelines in order to participate in the project—for which I continue to be very grateful. The list of essay titles in the “Table of Contents” offers a glimpse into the breadth and depth of interpretations of the topic and different directions taken in responses to the theme of leadership for teacher education. Clearly, there is much for us to consider and learn from these voices about where (and how) teacher education takes place and who is leading the education faculty. Furthermore, what do these voices convey about contemporary visions of “preferred futures” (Magnusson, 2014) for teacher education?

The first-hand knowledge and rich expertise deans can offer in-house as leaders of teacher education, in addition to perspectives on relevant research and policy for teacher education broadly speaking, frequently appears to be underestimated as a source of critical insights for policymakers and others responsible for making decisions about the future direction of teacher education. All fourteen of the essays here resonate with knowledge and expertise gained from experience in the field, draw attention to emic (or insider) perspectives on leadership practices that endeavour to inform and improve pedagogy for contemporary teacher education, and raise critical questions going forward. Whether taken together or read as stand-alone pieces, these explorations of nuanced approaches to navigating the complex challenges and opportunities encountered in their work as deans of education make for compelling reading. They also provoke further reflection and increased understandings of leadership for change.

As a result of actively engaging with insights shared in this collage of resonant voices, readers might promote further critical discussion and increased understandings of the role of the dean in leadership for teacher education and change in their own geographical location and/or institutional context. The text offers a highly accessible resource for education decision makers, practitioners/teacher education researchers, and interested policymakers—all stakeholders who have the capacity to invite informed voices from the field to the table, thus actively enhancing meaningful discussion and informing decision-making processes from multiple perspectives.

Wepner, D’Onofrio, and Wilhite (2008) concluded, “Effectiveness in the deanship is a combination of the person and the institutional culture” (p. 166). As the voices presented in this rich sampling of diverse perspectives on leadership for change will demonstrate, the knowledge, expertise, and aptitudes of these deans of education clearly reside in advocating wisely today for the future of teacher education tomorrow.

REFERENCES


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1. TOGETHER TODAY FOR SOCIETY’S FUTURE

*Indigenous Teacher Education in the Yukon*

INTRODUCTION

The Yukon is a unique context for Indigenous education in Canada. Most First Nations are self-governing; there are no reserves or reserve schools. Nonetheless, FN students have less educational success in the K-12 system than their non-FN counterparts in the same classrooms and schools. Self-determination and educational success go hand-in-hand. We need to pursue a model of teacher education in the Yukon and all of Canada which creates teachers of Indigenous and non-Indigenous background who can integrate Indigenous understandings and knowledge into their curriculum and teaching. In this way, we can build a just educational system for all students.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Forty years ago, a group of First Nations leaders from the Yukon travelled to Ottawa to present a document to then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Impatient, and rightfully so, with the social and economic issues faced by Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Native Brotherhood wrote *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* (1973), thus setting out a vision for a just future which would enable full participation by Yukon First Nations in the dominant society. They were not asking for handouts but for opportunity and challenged government to truly hear what they were saying. First Nations in the Yukon never had treaties and at the time, the Territorial was fully managed by the federal government. The Yukon Native Brotherhood wanted to build a society in which Indigenous people were full citizens with full rights and responsibilities, to enable all people in the Yukon to work together for the benefit of everyone.

However, *Together Today* took the bold step of setting out the conditions needed for full participation and equality by Indigenous people, a model that would inform future self-governing agreements, one that remains a model today for Indigenous self-determination. “If we are successful, the day will come when ALL Yukoners will be proud of our Heritage and Culture and will respect our Indian identity. Only then will we be equal Canadian brothers [sic]” (p. 16). *Together Today* asks that First Nations peoples, culture, language and tradition be as equally valued as European culture and that First Nations people control their own destiny. Summing up the situation for First Nations people at the time, they wrote: “We are...
being brainwashed that White is right and Indian is wrong …” (p. 16). “We must have the right to be different and the right to be accepted as fellow citizens and fellow human beings. Most of the time, the Whiteman has insisted that we become instant Whitemen. This was never possible” (p. 18). “With a just settlement of our claims, we feel we can participate as equals and then we will be able to live together as neighbours” (p. 16). “We want to take part in the development of the Yukon and Canada, not stop it. But we can only participate as Indians. We will not sell our heritage for a quick buck” (p. 18).

Together Today provided the foundation for the self-government agreements currently in place for 11 or 14 Yukon First Nations. Self-government has created a unique context for Indigenous people and thus Indigenous education in the Yukon. Self-government for Yukon First Nations means settled land claims, their own governments and control of their own resources, including funds for economic development, health and social services and education. First Nations (there are few Metis or Inuit in the Yukon) make up 25% of the population. There are no reserves in the Yukon and no reserve or band schools. First Nations students attend the same schools as their non-First Nations counterparts and per student funding for First Nations students is no different than for non-First Nations students. As in other parts of Canada, the legacy of residential schools is writ large upon the Indigenous population.

In spite of self-government, First Nations students continue to experience less educational success than their non-First Nations counterparts, particularly in rural communities. We must ask ourselves why, in spite of self-government and self-determination, First Nations students in the same K-12 schools as non-First Nations students still have lower levels of educational achievement. Perhaps we need to look beyond self-determination, as important as that is, and focus on the educational system itself. In spite of efforts towards Indigenization of our programs and institutions, is there something inherent in our system which de-privileges Indigenous learners? De France (2013) states that “academia has a long-standing tradition of designing and delivering courses in a way that favours Eurocentric ways of knowing and being, claiming that if people want to succeed, they must adapt to this variant of teaching and learning” (p. 87). When we are training teachers in the academic tradition, how can we expect them to teach differently in their own classrooms?

Education is key to fully realizing the vision set out in Together Today which makes educational achievement for First Nations all the more important. The direct connection between education and economic participation is clear and important; the role of education in having all people understand and value Indigenous culture is a bigger challenge. Certainly strides have been made. Yukon College delivers the Yukon Native Teacher (YNTEP) education program, one of many such programs offered by the university of Regina (among others) that has increased the number of Indigenous teachers in public schools, First Nations departments of education and the Yukon government department of education. The program is also open to non-First Nations students. As a result, non-Indigenous pre-service teachers build a solid understanding of First Nations history, values and culture.
studying side-by-side with their First Nations colleagues—a small part of the vision expressed in Together Today. The program incorporates Indigenous values and cultural understanding through on the land culture camps taught with the involvement of elders.

However, even these programs do not go far enough in providing meaningful integration of Indigenous epistemology. If we cannot provide teacher education programs which model this integration, how can we expect ALL teachers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to lead their own classrooms and develop curriculum in ways that realize the goals of Together Today? These goals are not simply nice sentiments, but critical to addressing historic wrongs and furthering the work of creating a more just society for Indigenous people.

Marie Battiste (2002) writes:

Canada’s educational institutions have largely ignored and continue to ignore Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy. It is clear that the exclusive use of Eurocentric knowledge has failed First Nations children. However, despite this realization … few teacher training institutions have developed any insight into the legal, political and cultural foundations of Aboriginal people, often treating Indigenous knowledge as if it were a matter of multi-cultural and cross-cultural education. (p. xx)

This is, in my opinion, an important point. Indigenous people are not simply another thread in Canada’s multicultural tapestry; colonialism and Eurocentric education are examples of the inherent hegemonic tendencies of our society reinforced and reproduced by our educational systems. Thus teaching (at all levels), developing curricula and even administering programs are political acts. We as educators, especially as educators of teachers, have a particular responsibility and obligation to critically reflect on what we do.

Critical pedagogy is well known within educational contexts. Paulo Friere, Henri Giroux, bell hooks and Michael Apple are familiar names frequently cited in any number of graduate papers. But in practice, has post-secondary education itself turned a critical eye to its own pedagogy and practice? Eric Margolis would say “No.” Margolis’s series of essays, The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education (2001), written by and for post-secondary educators, turns the critical pedagogy lens onto the post-secondary world and suggests that universities and colleges are guilty of producing gender, race and class hierarchies which support society’s inequalities. We produce programs and curricula that, in spite of our academic expertise and best intentions (in most cases), have not critically examined what is included and what is not. The exclusion of Indigenous knowledge is a clear example of hidden curriculum which becomes doubly problematic in teacher education. Battiste (2002) writes that it is time for educators to reaffirm, as the courts have, the right of Aboriginal people to have their rights respected and protected:

The task then, is to sensitize the western consciousness of Canadians in general and educators in particular to the colonial and neo-colonial practices that continue to marginalize and racialize Aboriginal students and to the
unique rights and relationships Aboriginal people have in their homeland … educators must be made aware of the existing interpretative monopoly of Eurocentric education and learn how the fundamental political processes of Canada have been laced with racism. (p. 10)

These are extremely hard questions to ask ourselves. We want to believe that we are good people (particularly if we are educators) who think long and hard about ethical practice. However, if we are to live up to our ideals, we must ask ourselves these hard questions and be prepared for even harder-to-hear answers. In my own teaching of graduate students in education, many of whom are already practicing educators, their graduate studies are often the first time they encounter the concept of critical examination of one’s own practices (teaching, curriculum) and philosophies for hidden hegemony. This should not be the case. Rather, all of us should be regularly practicing rigorous, critical self-reflection, focusing on the “why” of what we have chosen to do and not to do in our teaching, to include and not include in our curriculum and program planning. We spend considerable time on the “what” and “how” and not enough on the processes by which we made these decisions in the first place.

Which brings us full-circle and back to the vision set out for Indigenous people in the Yukon in Together Today. More than 40 years ago they recognized the key role of education in the journey to making full equality a reality for First Nations peoples. It is only through education that ALL people will come to understand Indigenous history, tradition and culture as equal. The education system, through residential schools, was originally used to try and wipe out Indigenous identity. Thus the current education system, including teacher education, has particular responsibility to right this wrong. Furthermore, this goes beyond cross-cultural training; it requires deep critical reflection and a hard look at the foundations of our contemporary curricula. By critically examining our own programs, curricula and practice with an eye to decolonization, we also begin to address issues of hegemony and working towards a more just society for everyone.

Forty years ago, Yukon First Nations leadership marched on Ottawa to demand acknowledgment of their inherent rights as Indigenous people. They wished to fully participate in society to build a better future for everyone’s children, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. We in the Yukon continue to work towards fully achieving that vision. It is a vision that is important for all of Canada and Canadian society: In essence, by working together to create more just educational systems, we can contribute to a more just society, for the benefit of everyone’s children.

There are no quick or easy answers to these important questions. Systems have a life of their own and are difficult to change. A student of mine ended a recent paper with a few lines by the German poet Maria Rainer Rilke which feel very apropos here:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. … And the point is, to live everything. Live the
questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

Where better to begin unlocking the rooms than teacher education programs?

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2. THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENTIATION ON TEACHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

It is spring 2014, and teacher education in Ontario is the midst of epic change. Policy based regulations and laws versus guidelines are entirely different. It is relatively easy to create agreements in the form of guidelines or accords. One such example is the high level Accord on Initial Teacher Education created by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2005). Policy, law, and regulations demand compliance in practice.

Ontario teacher education programs currently operate out of 13 publically funded universities. In part a legacy of the Mike Harris government, non-publically funded teacher education is offered as well in Ontario via cross-border universities such as Charles Sturt University (Australia), as well as those operating under special Ministerial Consent such as Redeemer University College.

My essay focuses on the impact of government legislated change on publically funded universities. Players include the deans of the 13 publically funded universities, the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF); the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) which creates legislation and policy in relation to funding universities and colleges. Finally, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) plays a key role in teacher education. OCT was created under the Mike Harris government and it has the power and authority under the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, Ontario Regulation 347/02 to accredit teacher education programs in Ontario. OCT certifies teachers from beyond Ontario, and also makes judgments about “fitness to practice” (Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996a).

POLICY ON DIFFERENTIATION

A pivotal influence on current Liberal party MTCU policy with regard to colleges and universities is the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario or HEQCO, “an agency of the government of Ontario” (Weingarten & Deller, 2010, p.2). HEQCO’s purpose is to provide government with informed opinions to guide policy decisions. Since 2010, MTCU has been considering differentiation, commissioning HEQCO’s The Benefits of Greater Differentiation of Ontario’s University Sector. In July 2013, HEQCO published A Data Set to Inform the Differentiation Discussion. Moodie (2013) writing in University Affairs describes...
this study as flawed because it measures or groups “Ontario universities on only one dimension, research intensity.”

The impact of differentiation is that universities are identified differently. This is about categorizing and branding each university, and extends to issues of mission, vision, scope and purpose. The HEQCO variables impacting differentiation include research intensity, teaching focus, and focus on graduate and/or undergraduate programs. Enshrined in Acts, typically, Canadian university governance is bicameral, via Boards of Trustees (or Governors) and Senate. Universities promote the dissemination of knowledge (teaching) and the production of new knowledge (research). Research and graduate programs are closely aligned because it is through research that we engage in training graduate students. Indeed, I would argue that all universities privilege research, otherwise they are not universities. They do this, for example, via tenure and promotion, annual reports and merit. While processes are different in each university, service, teaching and research are key elements of the work of scholars.

Key to government achieving differentiation has been to require each university to submit “strategic mandate agreements” or SMAs, which were due in to MTCU by Christmas of 2013. SMAs require each university to identify areas of strength. These would then impact funding, programs, hiring, and thus potentially all faculty, staff and students. Some SMAs may have identified teacher education as a priority; this would depend on internal priorities and politics. Everything, after all, is special. The outcomes of the SMA process have yet to be realized, and will be impacted by the outcome of the June 2014 election. There are potentially massive impacts for publically funded universities as a whole, internally and externally, politically, pedagogically, and fiscally.

**TEACHER EDUCATION AND DIFFERENTIATION**

The focus for deans of education in spring 2013 was much anticipated change to teacher education. Yet to be announced formally by MTCU, these changes were discussed in the context of an oversupply of teachers from public and private universities. As a result, deans of education learnt that enrolment might be cut and capped, programs and practicum days lengthened. With no formal regulations in place, it was announced in the spring of 2013 that in the fall a Program Change Agreement (PCA) would need to be submitted to and then negotiated with MTCU including program elements, a transition plan, funding and enrolment. In a university setting where change typically is turgid because of internal consultation processes and multiple levels of governance and associated approvals, deans were concerned about timing. Many of us worried that Ministry had not yet undertaken a cost analysis of changes. Overall, it seemed that there was little understanding of the impact of this, internally and externally. Impact is context dependent, given that each of the 13 universities is uniquely different in terms of age, location, size, and program foci.

On June 5th 2013, the announcement came via the media, and here I cite the *Globe and Mail*. Alphonso, Morrow, and Bradshaw (2013) announced that all
THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENTIATION

changes would be required to be in effect at all 13 publically funded Ontario universities by the start of the academic year in 2015. There would be a major funding cut. Each BIU (basic income unit—the amount paid to fund each student) would be cut from 2.0 BIUs per student to 1.5. Each program would have its enrolment cut in half and capped. Program length would be increased from two terms to four; practicum would double in length from 40 days to 80. The fiscal impact would be massive:

Ontario will cut the number of new teachers who graduate every year in half and increase the length of time it takes them to complete a degree, The Globe and Mail has learned. The move is aimed at curbing the growing glut of would-be teachers who cannot find work in their field—not only in Ontario, but in several other regions of the country. It is also designed to keep Ontario-trained teachers competitive with their counterparts in other provinces and countries, who follow longer courses of study…The change, which is set to roll out by September, 2015, is expected to be announced Wednesday by Education Minister Liz Sandals and Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Brad Duguid …. The Ontario College of Teachers certifies 11,000 new teachers every year, of whom roughly 7,500 come from faculties of education within the province. (Alphonso, Morrow, & Bradshaw, 2013)

The funding and enrolment cuts will have a fourfold impact: The cut by 25% to BIU funding per student; no increase to tuition for teacher education mandated by MTCU (though tuition at private universities is not regulated); an increase in program and practicum length and therefore costs, and halving the number of students. For some universities, faculties of education provide significant income (based on BIUs and tuition). Executive Heads lobbied behind the scenes discussing implications with one another, internally, and with ministry officials. Smaller programs were now, potentially, in jeopardy. Large well-funded programs were less so. For each of us, our university context is unique, with associated challenges.

In November 2013 my decanal colleagues and I sent representatives to work with OCT on new accreditation procedures and the new OCT guide that would address the changes to program content and length, as well as practicum. The new program was integrated via Ontario College of Teachers Regulation 283/13 OCT, 1996, then approved October 23 2013; published via e-laws October 25 2013; published in the Ontario Gazette on November 9 2013 amending O. Reg 347/02 which is now revoked and substituted by the requirement that practicum is a minimum of 80 days in length; the program is four semesters long; program design is “consistent with and reflects the College’s ‘Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession’ and ‘Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession,’” “current research in teacher education” and “the integration of theory and practice in teacher education” (Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996b). The Regulation describes compliance procedures required for the implementation date of September 2015.

Over the fall and winter of 2013-2014 the deans of education told one another of our plans for expanded two-year programs of two terms each, or consecutive four
term programs. Some of us were considering disbanding concurrent education entirely; others believe that concurrent education must remain a staple, for internal funding and pedagogical reasons. Critically important vocational education in the form of technology education programs are in danger of being disbanded widely due to the very high cost of delivery. Other areas of specialization such as Intermediate Senior science and Aboriginal education are in jeopardy due to loss of critical capacity. Given the tight funding envelopes for BIU funded graduate spaces we were told by MTCU colleagues that it would not be possible at all for any of us to re-create our B.Ed degree programs as M.Ed or M.Teaching degree programs (in the context of our own M.Ed and doctoral programs, and two relatively small M. Teaching programs at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE UT) where the teaching components are accredited by OCT).

However, on May 1st 2014, shortly after the release of the Provincial Budget by Premier Wynne, articles published in the *Star* and *Globe and Mail* newspapers announced that OISE UT would be replacing its B.Ed program with the M.Teaching program, funded at 3 BIUs per student. Of course their enrolment would be cut in half. The M.Teaching would include the program elements required by MOE and OCT, and again the teaching portion would be accredited by OCT. Given the ongoing message that government would not fund graduate programs in teacher education, this news was surprising. There was a reaction. In particular, I note the article titled *Rivals Rip over Masters Plan for Would Be Teachers* published in the *Star* on May 6th 2014.

Issues raised have been lack of transparency, MTCU funding, purview, and the MTCU differentiation agenda which emerged at the time of writing in an article in *University Affairs* (MacDonald, 2014), titled *OISE Explains Its Decision to Drop BEd Programs*. MacDonald states:

[the] Ontario government has approved OISE’s plan to convert its existing 1,167 BEd spaces into up to 500 additional spaces for two existing graduate degrees—the master of teaching and master of arts in child study and education. The two programs already admit about 200 students annually. OISE anticipates their enrolment will grow to between 430 and 460 admissions. These two graduate-degree programs are just five semesters in all and are unique in the province for preparing students to be teachers within a research-steeped graduate program …. The change at OISE takes effect just as the Ontario government is requiring all undergraduate teacher education programs to increase to four semesters from two semesters currently. In addition, other Ontario universities’ teaching faculties face a mandated 50-percent cut to their annual undergraduate admissions—a government response to a glut of unemployed BEd graduates who can’t find work in their preferred profession. The faculties also face a 33-percent cut in government funding for the BEd spaces remaining. (MacDonald, 2014)

The practicalities of the funding difference are that the 3.0 BIU weight for the OISE M. Teaching masters student translates into $13,205 per student, which
compares unfavorably with the 1.5 BIU weight at $5,684 for a B.Ed student at all the other faculties of education in Ontario.

Significantly, the dean at OISE UT cites, as a rationale for the M. Teaching, the MTCU differentiation agenda. Citing the dean, MacDonald (2014) writes: “We wanted to be sure that whatever we did allowed us to make our unique contribution to the teaching profession … and it is our graduate programs, and our research intensity there, that will allow us to do that.” MacDonald continues, stating that this is “a response to the government’s—and her university’s—call for ‘differentiation,’ where universities are encouraged to focus on their unique program strengths instead of trying to be all things to all students” (MacDonald, 2014). The U of T news release said the move “plays to the strengths of the University of Toronto as an advanced research institution responding to the needs of a diverse population and a changing economy” (University of Toronto, 2014).

At the time of writing, the Ontario provincial election is imminent. If the story unfolds as I anticipate it will, teacher education in Ontario may indeed follow MTCUs differentiation agenda. In the interim, the Brock PCA, along with others submitted in Fall 2013, have not yet been approved by MTCU. I expect we must wait for the new government to judge both the PCAs and SMAs. Meantime, I am certain internal discussions are taking place at all the other 12 publicly funded universities in Ontario. At Brock we are open to change and to renewing our vision of and for teacher education and graduate studies in education. And as we do so, I am reminded of the great art historian Linda Nochlin’s (1988) thesis, “the personal is political” (p. 146). Indeed.

NOTES

1 The 13 universities are Lakehead University; Laurentian University (French and English); Nipissing University; York University; Queens University; Trent University; The University of the Ontario Institute for Technology; OISE/University of Toronto; Wilfred Laurier University, Brock University, Western University and the University of Windsor and Ottawa University.

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