

Pamphlet # 13

Teaching From an Aboriginal Perspective Theme 2*

The material in this section is adapted from two sources: "Teaching from an Aboriginal Perspective" (2000) by Herman Michell, faculty member of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now the First Nations University of Canada, and a research report "Strengthening the Circle: Facilitating Success of First Nations Students in a Non-Native Post Secondary Institution" (2000) by Joan Roy and Mary Hampton, faculty members of the University of Regina and Luther College respectively, and professors of Psychology. The authors agree on the importance of distributing this information as widely as possible.

Please refer to Pamphlet #12 for the complete introduction and Conclusion.

Theme Two: Including Aboriginal content in the curriculum is a tool for facilitating student success

- 1) Collaborate with Aboriginal Elders to identify concept and content areas relevant to culture and languages. Develop detailed and activity centred programs.
- 2) Actively engage in learning about Aboriginal history, colonization, culture, languages, traditions, taboos and visions for the future. This will help you to avoid classroom & community misunderstandings.
- 3) Concentrate on positive contributions

* Thanks to the University of Regina for permission to use this material.

made by Aboriginal people, but also show the reality of their different living circumstances - urban, rural and reserve environments.

4) Curriculum is organic and personal. Understand the oral tradition of narrative. Actively ask questions and participate in Aboriginal communities, ceremonies, gatherings, etc. Approach the Elders and knowledge carriers of the community. Learn about proper protocols when approaching Elders - offer tobacco.

5) Critique the textbooks that you use in your courses. Many of them are Euro-centric. They transmit values, norms, traditions, and stories of the cultures producing them. Try to select texts that have an accurate portrayal of Aboriginal experiences and preferably by Aboriginal authors.

Conclusion

The above are guidelines and examples to assist you in the classroom. For Aboriginal people, learning has always been regarded as a life-long process and there are many ways of teaching and learning. For instructors at the post-secondary level, it is important to remember that all of us are on a life-long journey in the learning process.

People perceive the world in different ways, learn about the world in different ways, and demonstrate what they have learned in different ways. An individual approach to learning and demonstration of what he or she has learned is influenced by values, norms, and socialization practices of the culture in which that individual has been acculturated

The research results offer strategies for individual faculty members to use in facilitating success. However, it would be a mistake to assume that as some individual faculty members

change attitudes and behaviour, the success rate of Aboriginal students will automatically increase. Changes need to be systemically and scientifically implemented to make certain their addition is organizational in nature rather than isolated subsystems of an educational institution.

Contacts

Fred Shore, Office of University Accessibility,
474-6084 fred_shore@umanitoba.ca

Kali Storm, Aboriginal Student Centre,
474-8850 kali_storm@umanitoba.ca

Accessibility



Aboriginal Information Series
Office of University Accessibility
August 2006
Number 13