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TEACHING (IN) THE CANADIAN NORTH



Winter 2013



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INTRODUCTION: TEACHING (IN) THE CANADIAN NORTH

JULIE PERRONE is Executive Director of the Association for Canadian Studies.

This year, the Association for Canadian Studies celebrated its 40th anniversary. Our main publication, *Canadian Issues*, is almost as old as us, its first issue released in 1975. Throughout these past decades, *Canadian Issues* has covered a plethora of topics pertaining to Canada and its history. We covered everything from regionalism, immigration, international relations, urbanity, to food studies, hockey and mental health.

As we approach the end of this anniversary year, we noticed one particular area we had never ventured in before: the Canadian North. We thus decided to devote the last issue of 2013 to the North, both as a geographical area and an academic field, with a particular focus on how best to teach this multidisciplinary and rapidly changing field, so central to the Canadian identity, yet often times marginalized in the teaching of Canadian history. And as you will be able to see, all our contributors have demonstrated in their own way that understanding the North is crucial to our understanding of Canada.

P. Whitney Lackenbauer opens this special edition with a strong piece about how historical knowledge shapes our understanding of the Canadian North, especially when it comes to questions of sovereignty and security. As Lackenbauer argues, history helps us move away from a “narrow fixation on sovereignty loss” to consider instead how Canada has actually benefitted in many ways from “a longstanding, responsible strategy that affords us as strong a sovereignty position as international law allows and also maintains constructive relations with our Arctic neighbours.” For Lackenbauer, debates over sovereignty losses, over the alarming rate at which the North is changing, what he calls this ‘crisis mentality’, should not keep us from using the past for guidance, as we face the many challenges that have arisen and will continue to arise in Canada’s Arctic.

From a general reflection on history and the Canadian North, we move to Julia Christensen’s call for a more people-focused teaching of the North. As Christensen suggests, educators have to ensure that the North they teach about is not “separate from its people.” Living and working in the Northwest Territories for most of her life, she wants to “dispel the national myth of a vast but empty North,” a myth she has encountered on many occasions. Not only do we need to make northern Indigenous peoples part of our understanding of the North, says Christensen, but we also need to look at “the many ways in which northern people have ...influenced the course of northern history...and Canadian history.”

Both Brendan Griebel and Sue Heffernan agree with Christensen: when teaching (in) the Canadian North, one must ensure that its peoples are an integral part of the entire narrative. Doing so requires shaping the knowledge and the methods used to both produce it and disseminate it to the realities of the North and to take into account the necessarily multidisciplinary nature of that knowledge. Griebel's piece is a reflection on his fascinating *parcours* as he developed, and then revisited, a course on archeology adapted to the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. As he realized during his stay in the community, knowledge acquisition in the North differed greatly from what he had been used to and trained for. Griebel indeed found that he needed to "de-emphasiz[e] the pedagogic value of material artifacts... [and] incorporate local understandings of how and why historical learning takes place." In her Geography of Northern Canada course, Sue Heffernan also tries to impress on her students that understanding the North entails more than just learning about the region's geographical characteristics. Because most people studying the North will never step foot there, it is crucial, for Heffernan, that knowledge about the North be multidisciplinary and that learning about the North be an occasion to "both examine past images of the North, and to imagine what 'North' means" to each one of us.

Teaching the Canadian North, then, requires that we integrate the many disciplines necessary to fully understand what the North is, and what it represents, both for those living in the North and those learning about it. Amanda Graham's piece looks at the capacity of northern institutions to effectively teach northern studies,

with a particular focus on Yukon College, where Graham has been working for many years. As she argues, the field of northern studies has considerably evolved in the last few decades, becoming more broadly circumpolar and considerably more diverse, and northern institutions have had to adapt to this evolution as well. Technological developments and government investments have helped these institutions develop a capacity for knowledge production and dissemination, allowing them to both learn and teach about their own culture and potential.

After this examination of northern institutions, we then focus on the North in the context of classrooms more specifically, with Heather E. McGregor discussing Nunavut's school curriculum and David R. Gray talking about his work on the Canadian Arctic expedition. In her compelling piece on the teaching of history in and of the North, McGregor suggests that we continue, still today, to conceptualize the North through an essentially colonial frame. She calls instead for approaches that "are culturally responsive, locally relevant, and supportive of community-driven visions for school change." David R. Gray has done some tremendous work on the history of the North and talks here more specifically about the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. Gray points to the rich repository of sources about the Expedition, "photos, film footage, personal diaries and scientific reports," all readily available to teach and learn about this key event in both northern and Canadian history. As Gray states, "The Canadian Arctic Expedition is a hidden jewel in Canada's buried history treasure chest, just waiting to be unearthed and shared within the country and with the very interested world."

SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY IN THE CANADIAN NORTH: (RE)LEARNING THE LESSONS

P. WHITNEY LACKENBAUER, Ph.D., is associate professor and chair of the department of history at St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo, Ontario. A frequent commentator and author on Northern issues, his most recent books include *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (UBC Press, 2013) and *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security and Stewardship* (co-authored, WLU Press, 2011). His co-authored book *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* won the 2009 Donner Prize for the best Canadian book on public policy.

ABSTRACT

Understanding the history of the Canadian North is key to comprehending our peculiar mindset about Arctic issues – particularly when it comes to sovereignty. History can give us confidence, allowing us to break away from a narrow fixation on sovereignty loss, as well as yielding valuable lessons about the unintended consequences of sovereignty and security practices conceived in southern political centres and deployed in the North without sufficient regard for local impacts.

“Canada’s Arctic is central to our national identity as a northern nation. It is part of our history. And it represents the tremendous potential of our future.” Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s words, proclaimed in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, in 2007, connected the past, present, and future. Canada boasts the world’s longest coastline, and most of it is in the Arctic. It has extensive jurisdiction and sovereign rights in the region, which it sees as a resource frontier, a homeland for its northern peoples, and a source of national identity.

Over the last decade, the changing Arctic has become front page news in Canada and around the world. Uncertainty over climate change, international interest in Arctic resources, undefined continental shelf boundaries, potentially viable maritime transportation routes (particularly the Northwest Passage which Canada considers its internal waters, not an international strait), and perceived sovereignty and security threats make Canadians keen observers of geopolitical dynamics related to the Arctic and what these mean for their foreign, defence, and domestic policies.

At the highest political levels, the Canadian government has intertwined sovereignty and security issues with strong rhetoric asserting Canada’s status as an “Arctic superpower.” On the other hand, a more optimistic message emerges in Canada’s

official *Northern Strategy* and its statement on Canadian Arctic foreign policy, which express clear confidence in Canada's sovereignty position and place a high priority on improving the social and economic well-being of northern residents, protecting the environment, and improving Arctic governance – regionally and internationally. This dual messaging emphasizing sovereignty, security, and national interests, as well as international cooperation and stewardship, reveals Canada's complex perspective and position on Arctic issues.

Understanding the history of the Canadian North is key to comprehending our peculiar mindset about Arctic issues – particularly when it comes to sovereignty.

Scholars have gone to great lengths to emphasize vulnerabilities in or uncertainties about our sovereignty claims in the Arctic over time – not Canada's remarkable achievement of consolidating its Arctic sovereignty position since 1880 through diplomacy and state action.

The Alaska Boundary dispute serves as a prime example of American bullying and expansionist tendencies, Britain's acquiescence, and our fledgling dominion's need to take control over its own destiny – because no one else would uphold our interests. Did Canada have the stronger case? Probably not, but such considerations do not matter much in nationalist myth-making.

Historians often cite the Second World War and early Cold War as examples of how American security imperatives forced Canada to take strategic notice of its Northwest and then the High Arctic, threatening Canadian sovereignty and control. But the Alaska Highway bolstered rather than eroded Canada's position in the end, and bilateral agreements to build and operate the Joint Arctic Weather Stations on remote Arctic islands in the late 1940s and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line from 1955-57 similarly confirmed Canadian sovereignty. Neither Canada nor the United States compromised core principles, but acted as respectful neighbours and allies with shared interests in continental defence.

Since the 1960s, when sovereignty and security discussions shifted to Arctic waters, differing Canadian and American positions on the legal status of the channels through Canada's Arctic Archipelago have proven more vexing. The transits of the oil tanker *S.S. Manhattan* in 1969 and the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Polar Sea* in 1985 affirmed that the United States considers the Northwest

Passage an international strait, open to navigation like other strategic straits around the world. Canada insists that these are internal waters, subject to full Canadian sovereignty and control. Bridging this legal chasm has proven impossible, but the two countries have managed it in constructive ways – such as the 1988 Arctic Cooperation Agreement, brokering a practical compromise on U.S. icebreaker transits while “agreeing to disagree” on the legal status.

How we understand history shapes how we perceive the Canada-U.S. relationship in the Arctic, and expectations about Canada's place in the circumpolar world more generally. Political scientist Rob Huebert contends that we are entering a new era of the Arctic where climate change, newly accessible resources, and burgeoning global interest place Canada in a precarious sovereignty and security environment. At best, he asserts, history reveals Canada's limited capacity to protect its sovereignty and security in the region and explains why other nations have advanced Arctic claims at the expense of Canada's.

An emphasis on historical cooperation, however, suggests that Canada has benefited from a longstanding, responsible strategy that affords us as strong a sovereignty position as international law allows and also maintains constructive relations with our Arctic neighbours. Intermittent sovereignty and security “crises,” however, have failed to provide the political and popular interest required to support a sustained, strategic investment in the region. History can give us confidence, allowing us to break away from a narrow fixation on sovereignty loss, as well as yielding valuable lessons about the unintended consequences of sovereignty and security practices conceived in southern political centres and deployed in the North without sufficient regard for local impacts.

While commentators such as Rob Huebert suggest that there is a “perfect storm” brewing today that will fundamentally destabilize Northern life, this is not a new scenario. Inuit and other Northern peoples felt the disruptive impacts of defence footprints on and in their homelands after the Second World War. The DEW Line stations were beachheads of modernism: sites of wage employment, new housing, access to social services, and Western technology and material culture. Although not primarily designed to bring Aboriginal peoples under state control, defence initiatives had far reaching effects. Inuit

political leader Mary Simon has summarized that “too often, military projects are centralized undertakings that are unilaterally imposed on indigenous peoples and their territories.” Stated as such, the so-called “militarization” of the Arctic appears to fit within the framework of a coercive state interested in re-engineering Northern life to conform with modern (and military) priorities.

In other cases, however, the military learned how to engage in meaningful dialogue and value Northern perspectives to support sovereignty and security. The Canadian Rangers, a unique military organization established in 1947, are a case in point. Rather than committing full-time soldiers to defend remote northern and coastal regions against an unlikely invasion, the military recognized the value of having volunteers who already lived in isolated communities serve as its “eyes and ears.” Over time, the military, the Rangers, and their host communities developed strong relationships rooted in respect and mutual learning. As a bridge between cultures and between the civilian and military realms, the Rangers grew to embody the successful integration of national security and sovereignty agendas with community-based activities and local stewardship. Today, this practical partnership, rooted in traditional knowledge and skills, serves as an important example of cooperation, communal and individual empowerment, and cross-cultural understanding.

Placing Northerners at the centre of the national conversation about sovereignty, security, and stewardship requires moving beyond political statements, media coverage, and “expert” academic opinion gleaned from archives and public documents. It means embracing various lenses to understand the historical and contemporary North, and requires commitment to an ongoing dialogue.

My travels throughout Canada’s North over the last decade have taught me to ask new questions and to think in new ways. For example, in August 2010, when I was embedded with a Canadian military unit on Operation Nanook. On the first night, after we established camp on Bylot Island, Ranger Pauloosie Atagootak invited me for a walk. As we trudged over the tundra and down lush valleys, I asked him questions about the land, and he told me stories and shared his thoughts on living in the North.

After walking for about half an hour, Paul sat down on one of the downward slopes. After a couple of minutes of silence, he said the simple words: “I’m home.” I felt it: the connection to the land, his homeland, his identity. He had spent much of his childhood in camps along this stretch of coastline. The land was as familiar to him as it was exotic and remote to me.

As we sat on the soft ground, we talked about community life. He worried about the younger generation who spent all their time plugged into iPods and playing video games. Paul pointed out that the clouds told of the weather coming in. How many children in Nunavut still looked to the skies each night, as his grandfather had taught him to do? Would climate change alter weather patterns so much that it would render such traditional knowledge moot? If resource development did spark a modern-day gold rush in Nunavut, how would the next generation of Nunavummiut fare? I dared not speculate. Nevertheless, Paul provided a reassuring message. Inuit had faced challenges in the past, and they had proven resilient.

A “crisis” mentality conditions us to react hastily rather than to listen, discern, and act prudently. The idea of change at an “unprecedented pace” suggests that the past can no longer offer guidance. But it can, and it should. Canadian officials have had lots of experience managing sovereignty and security agendas in light of major geopolitical change since the Second World War. Balancing these considerations with domestic imperatives to improve the quality of life of Northerners, and translating our Northern strategy into deliverables that reinforce a constructive and secure circumpolar world, are real challenges facing Canada in the twenty-first century Arctic.

PUTTING IT INTO CONTEXT: TEACHING THE CANADIAN NORTH TO LEARN ABOUT CANADA

JULIA CHRISTENSEN is a geographer and creative writer. She is a SSHRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow at UBC, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, and a former Trudeau Scholar. As of December 2013, she begins her new post as Assistant Professor in Environmental, Social and Spatial Change at Roskilde University, Denmark. There, she will continue teaching and learning about the circumpolar North.

ABSTRACT Teaching and learning about the Canadian North is about more than just life north of the 60th parallel. This region, vast and complex, offers us so much in our understanding of Canada. In teaching the Canadian North, we cannot as educators perpetuate narratives of a North that can be understood as separate from its people. One of the central responsibilities for teachers of the Canadian North, I believe, is to *place* people in the Canadian North and to dispel the national myth of a vast but empty North. Placing people in the Canadian North requires a nuanced discussion of northern Indigenous peoples, their encounters with the colonial state, and broader Indigenous-Canada relations. Unsettling dominant narratives of the Canadian North in the classroom also means paying attention to the many ways in which northern people have not only influenced the course of northern history, but also Canadian history.

INTRODUCTION

Penpals were a ‘thing’ when I was growing up. On the back pages of the Archie comics I bought at the corner store would be a list of kids’ addresses from across North America, hoping to connect with someone their age living in a different part of the world. I loved to write to penpals and to imagine what life might be like as a young boy or girl growing up in rural Montana, New York City, or Moncton, New Brunswick. They, in turn, learned a bit about my childhood in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

In grade three, I was absolutely delighted when our teacher announced that our class had been paired with a class “down South”—Toronto, to be exact. We spent the afternoon deciding what we would write in our letters, and what we wanted to know about our penpals’ lives. “Do you like living in a big city?” I wrote. “Do you go to Canada’s Wonderland? What is your favourite subject in school?”

Two months later, our teacher came into the class carrying a fat stack of letters. She passed them out to us one by one. You could have heard a pin drop in the class, we were so thrilled as we opened up our envelopes.

Our quiet excitement turned first to a few giggles scattered throughout the room, then more and more until we were reading out loud to each other the questions our southern penpals asked of us.

“Do you live in igloos?”

“Do you travel by dog team?”

“Do you know what summer is?”

We weren't laughing at our new penpals. We were genuinely surprised at the questions. It was the first time I realized that life in northern Canada was something really unique, and largely mysterious for many school-age children in southern Canada. Yet the North was—*is*—so central to our collective understanding of what Canada is as a country, and what it means to be Canadian. I put a great deal of thought into my letter back to my Toronto penpal. I told him about the dark winters, and the midnight sun in the summer. We had grocery stores, I wrote, but we eat caribou and northern cranberries, too.

TEACHING THE CANADIAN NORTH

As a graduate student in Geography, I thought back to that experience many times. When I decided to pursue an academic career, and focus on researching and teaching the Canadian North, it was a decision I made in part because I wanted to bring my own personal experiences as a northerner into southern university classrooms. I wanted to teach the North to students who may have never before visited northern communities. When I was an undergraduate student myself, there was very little taught about the North in my classes. When there was, it tended to reinforce one or more of several popular stereotypes: a vast frontier filled with resource wealth; a region central to Canadian identity and national sovereignty in need of military protection; or, a place lost in time where Indigenous peoples live happily and in harmony with the land. Neglected was that many of the issues that we explored in an international context—development, independence, land rights, geopolitics, political mobilization, poverty—are also central to a deeper understanding of what is taking place right now in the Canadian North.

Today, as a university instructor, my goal is to increase southern students' exposure to the North and challenge common geographical imaginations (Gregory 1994) about the North, all the while placing northern peoples front

and centre in that geographical understanding. Yet as I have gained more experience, I have quickly learned that teaching and learning about the Canadian North is also a place for exploring bigger, more difficult questions about Canada that are too often left unasked in grade school and post-secondary education: questions about colonialism, Indigenous land rights, and Indigenous-Canada relations. These questions are equally central to our understanding of Canada, both historically and in present-day. As we learn more about the Canadian North, we learn more about Canada.

PLACING PEOPLE IN THE CANADIAN NORTH

A quick scan of the syllabi for Geography course offerings across Canadian universities reveals an interesting, and telling, trend. Of all the regional geography courses offered (for example, Geography of Asia, Geography of Africa), most tend to focus primarily on the social, cultural and economic dimensions of those regions, save one—the Geography of the Canadian North, or other northern/Arctic regions. Here, most courses are either couched entirely in the biophysical 'side' of Geography, or lean heavily in that direction. A northern geography field course I recently reviewed had, out of its five modules, only one that addressed the human dimensions of northern life. The relative absence of northern people in these courses is representative of a common view of the North as a barren, pristine land full of biophysical wonders (permafrost, sea ice, non-renewable resources) and threats (climate change, resource development). Human beings, meanwhile, play only a marginal role.

In the winter 2013 semester, I taught an undergraduate course on the Geography of the Canadian North. Feedback from students on their anonymous course evaluations was overall very positive. Nevertheless, I was perplexed at two students who complained that I had “focused too much on Indigenous people.” Perhaps they had missed the first class in the course where I mentioned that the majority of the population in northern Canada is Indigenous. This feedback, though, speaks to a persistent imagination of the North that sees the landmass as somehow separate from the people who live there.

Though this complaint was expressed by only two of 60 students, it confirms that the imagination of the North as 'terra incognita' persists (Doubleday 1999). One of

the central responsibilities for teachers of the Canadian North, I believe, is to *place* people in the Canadian North and to dispel the national myth of a vast but empty North most recently remembered to us by Prime Minister Harper's "use it or lose it"¹ justification for increased military presence in the Arctic. Instead, we must introduce students to the people who have been "using it" for generations—to their ways of life, their complexities and contradictions, and the ways in which they engage not only with the North, but also with Canada as a whole and, increasingly, the world beyond.

COLONIALISM IN THE CANADIAN NORTH

Placing people in the Canadian North requires a nuanced discussion of northern Indigenous peoples, their encounters with the colonial state, and broader Indigenous-Canada relations. Over the winter 2013 semester, teaching the Canadian North became an opportunity to discuss the Idle No More² movement with my students, to help them to understand the significance of the treaty system to Indigenous people across Canada in order to then paint a more detailed picture of fiduciary responsibility and the modern land claims process in the North. Discussing Idle No More was not a planned part of the course, but it was a relevant way to connect the course material with events developing in real time, as well as to encourage students to appreciate the shared struggles of Indigenous peoples Canada-wide.

The Idle No More movement provided an unplanned starting point for what was indeed a planned section of the course: colonialism in the Canadian North. Understanding the contemporary North requires an in-depth examination of how the past and present interact today, and how colonial continuities shape contemporary northern social, political, economic and environmental geographies. This includes a discussion of the early relationships with traders, missionaries, and the federal government, the Indian Residential School System (something I am always disheartened to discover many students have not learned about in previous classes), and the northward expansion of the Canadian Welfare State. Framing these developments within the overall context of colonialism can be a very difficult part of the class for students, because it directly challenges the popular belief that colonialism is something that has taken place elsewhere, not *here*. For my students, thinking of the Canadian North in relation to colonialism was not a task

that had been assigned to them previously. Not surprisingly, there was push back from some. The whole notion of settler colonialism can elicit discomfort, particularly in those with settler roots. But teaching the Canadian North is not exempt from the call for "a different way of doing things" (Cannon 2011) in how we understand colonial relations, decolonization, and reconciliation. Despite the discomfort, I had office visits from several students wanting to discuss their own positionality, experiences of racism in their communities, and their understanding of Indigenous-Canada relationships more broadly. The emphasis on residential school experiences in the North were also a gateway for understanding the scope and scale of the residential school system, nationwide, as well as its international impacts not just in northern communities but Indigenous communities across Canada. This course on the Canadian North had opened the door to an important transformation in the ways in which they understood not only Indigenous experiences but how their own lives were intimately tied to those experiences. To consider the colonial past and present in Canada means not only dispelling the frontier myth (see Furniss 1999), it effectively unsettles the history of settlement in Canada as it is taught in Canadian classrooms. It forces us—teacher and students—to reconsider who we are in the context of settler-colonial Canada.

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

Unsettling dominant narratives of the Canadian North in the classroom also means paying attention to the many ways in which northern people have not only influenced the course of northern history, but also Canadian history. Here again, the Canadian North provides a wealth of potential for such inroads. In direct opposition to popular stereotypes of northern Indigenous peoples as passive, silent stewards of the land, is the presence of activist, politically-savvy leaders in direct engagement with territorial and federal governments, environmental organizations, and increasingly with industry (see Cameron 2012 and Martello 2008 for further discussion). For example, many leading Indigenous voices have come from the North. Many of the founders of the Indian Brotherhood (which became the Assembly of First Nations) were Dene from the Northwest Territories. The 1973 Paulette Caveat, initiated by then-Chief Francois Paulette, and filed with other Dene chiefs in Yellowknife, opened the door for the modern land claims process. The 1974 Berger Inquiry (known

formally as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry) was a groundbreaking example of community consultation over a mega resource development. Despite the innovation of Justice Berger, the Inquiry would have never been what it was were it not for the efforts of Indigenous leadership in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, nor the will and resilience of the many Indigenous community members who gave testimony. The map of Canada was redrawn around Nunavut, the first modern land claim to result in its own public government, thanks to the work of Inuit innovators in the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). Political developments like these have not only inspired self-determination in southern Canada, but similarly for Indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world.

“IN OUR OWN WORDS”

Though my own upbringing in the Canadian North ultimately inspired my northern research and teaching interests, my lived experience is only one version of what it is to be a northerner. Growing up as a non-Indigenous person in a northern city like Yellowknife is not the same as growing up Dene in the same city. Nor is it the same as growing up Inuvialuit in Paulatuk, Métis in Fort Smith, or Inuit in Grise Fiord.

One of the benefits of teaching the Canadian North today is the gift of technology. Students in my class in Vancouver can learn about life in the North through the perspectives of northern residents, young and old, Indigenous or settler or recent immigrant alike. A much deeper understanding of the ways in which colonial legacies persist, and are resisted, can be found in the many thoughtful firsthand accounts offered up on in the Internet and through social media. Inuit youth rapping in the YouTube video “Don’t Call Me Eskimo”³ teach students about settlement life in Arctic Bay, Nunavut. The youth describe their boredom of living in a remote village, the high rates of suicide, and the lack of employment. But they also rap about the pride in being Inuit, learning to drive skidoos and go out on the land, and speaking the Inuktitut language. Meanwhile, the “Feeding My Family”⁴ blog calls attention to the high rates of food insecurity in Nunavut, providing detailed documentation of high food prices and other food security issues. A similar Facebook page was started in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to raise awareness about chronic housing need across the North⁵.

CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning about the Canadian North is about more than just life north of the 60th parallel. This region, vast and complex, offers us so much in our understanding of Canada. In teaching the Canadian North, we cannot as educators perpetuate narratives of a North that can be understood as separate from its people. Nor can we reinforce narratives of Indigenous people as passive or vulnerable. It is a place that still grieves the legacies of colonialism, but it is also a place of resilience, and a place where Indigenous people are actively engaged in the realization of a new North. It is a place where, through our classroom explorations, we can come to learn not just about northern peoples and place, but also about Indigenous-Canada relations and settler colonialism more broadly.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/story.html?id=7ca93d97-3b26-4dd1-8d92-8568f9b7cc2a>
- 2 Idle No More is an ongoing protest movement that began in December 2012. The movement brings together Indigenous peoples in Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) and their non-Indigenous supporters in Canada, and to a lesser extent, internationally in opposition to alleged legislative abuses of indigenous treaty rights by the Conservative federal government.
- 3 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS8RZcKQwBA>
- 4 <http://www.feedingmyfamily.org/>
- 5 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211491972278951/>

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NEGOTIATING NORTHERN PASTS: ONE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING TO TEACH HISTORY IN NUNAVUT

Over the last decade, **BRENDAN GRIEBEL** has lived, worked and traveled extensively throughout the circumpolar countries. His research is currently based in Nunavut, where he is the Senior Researcher for the Kitikmeot Heritage Society and runs a consultancy for heritage-related projects. In 2013, he received his doctorate degree in Anthropology from the University of Toronto.

ABSTRACT Over the last decade in Nunavut, the discipline of archaeology has been strongly encouraged to reconsider its practices and narratives concerning the past so as to better align with contemporary Inuit politics, culture and society. While archaeologists are open to new approaches for engaging Nunavut populations, there exist few tools within the discipline's repertoire for understanding history beyond the excavation and interpretation of material remains. This has become particularly apparent in situations where archaeologists use their trade to educate Inuit about their own history. This paper is a personal reflection on the act of teaching Arctic history, and describes my own attempts to better understand the greater context of history in the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. This is ultimately accomplished by de-emphasizing the pedagogic value of material artifacts, and developing more grounded research methodologies to incorporate local understandings of how and why historical learning takes place.

As an archaeologist, it has become tricky to teach about history in the North. The politics surrounding the creation of Nunavut as both an Inuit land claim settlement (1993) and Canadian territory (1999) has ushered a new era of self-consciousness into the discipline. The designation of Nunavut as an Inuit homeland—Nunavut literally translates as 'Our Land' in the Inuktitut language—has not only promoted indigenous title over the region's terrain, but over its history as well. Acknowledgement of Inuit ownership of the past has had direct implications for how archaeology is both perceived and practiced. Mandatory components of community engagement—including employment, education, and exhibition—are now requisite for incoming archaeology projects. The territory's archaeological materials have been redefined as "a record of Inuit use and occupancy of lands and resources through time" (NLCA 1993:33.2.1) and the involvement of Inuit in their identification, protection and conservation has been mandated as both "desirable and necessary" (ibid:33.2.2). With the past no longer the preserve of archaeologists, the discipline has been forced to rethink how they communicate their specialized brand of knowledge and engage local populations' own

understandings of what history is and how it is learned. Despite concerted attempts to teach the past through more culturally and socially sensitive frameworks (see for example Friesen 2002; Rowley 2002, Stenton and Rigby 1995), community interest in excavation-derived knowledge is rarely sustained, and archaeologists continue to struggle with the feeling that their fundamental messages regarding the nature and importance of the past are somehow being lost in translation. Put simply by northern archaeologist Sue Rowley (2002:270), a “dramatic change” is required in the way that archaeologists work with northern communities, “to formulate innovative research programs and gain a richer understanding of Inuit history.” This ultimately requires that archaeologists consider their role not only as teachers of history, but also as students of the subtle social and cultural rules that guide processes of learning about history in the North.

In 2006, I began a doctoral research program looking into new methods for archaeological engagement with Inuit communities. One of the original objectives for this project was the production of an educational course focused on uncovering the history of the landscape immediately around the Nunavut hamlet of Cambridge Bay, a community of roughly 1600 individuals (85% of whom are Inuit) located on the southern shore of Victoria Island. The course, as it was designed, would allow high school students to learn and apply the professional methodologies of archaeology through excavation and material interpretation, while also drawing important conceptual links between their own contemporary world and that of the past. After successful feedback from Cambridge Bay's high-school and partnering heritage organizations, a preliminary course outline was completed, and negotiations were underway to pilot the curriculum within a year's time. From an academic perspective, there was little reason why the course would not be a success; it was modeled after one of archaeology's most successful studies in community engagement (Moser et al. 2002) and its content and delivery methods had been sanctioned by university committees, ethical boards and northern authorities alike.

It was not until I actually moved to the Arctic in 2008 that my confidence in the curriculum's success began to waiver, and it became painfully obvious that the entire course had been devised according to logic utterly foreign to local circumstance. Between the time that discussions about the course began and the time I had moved north

to deliver its content—a space of approximately two years—the school had already seen the rotation of three principals and roughly half its staff of teachers, rendering carefully built alliances non-existent. Assurances of local enthusiasm for a new history course present in earlier email correspondence were less easily found on the ground. Obligations to family life, desire to be on the land, or simply the act of coping with day-to-day social challenges meant that few people had the time or passion to help push forward a program whose only contribution was academic knowledge about the past. For nearly a month in the summer of 2008 a team of University of Toronto archaeologists and I held a trial ‘community excavation’ while the stream of potential ‘community participants’ drove steadily past without stopping.

Despite having made a conscious effort to correspond with various Inuit individuals who would have a stake in the delivery of the course, the fundamentals of my course had ultimately been adopted from official narratives regarding both Inuit culture and the appropriate archaeological methods for interacting with it. Among these assumptions were that Inuit communities valued material artifacts for the information they shed on the past; that they saw the methodologies of archaeology as an authoritative means through which to interpret the past; and that they considered knowledge about the past as something that can exist independently of contemporary people and experience. It was with a fair amount of trepidation that I realized the project would have to be re-designed through recourse to local perspectives, beginning with the most basic question of how and why the learning of history takes place.

“You can come into a community knowing a lot or you can come into a community learning a lot. There is a big difference.” This was a valuable piece of advice given to me by Ernie Leblanc, a long time student councillor and wellness program instructor in Cambridge Bay. Upon the failure of my original curriculum program, I struggled to untangle the preconceptions of my research from the realities that guided life in the Arctic. Such was the extent of this unravelling that I was ultimately left with only a series of loose threads. Over the course of the next three years, I began to slowly weave these back together in a fashion that made more sense at a local level. The first step in rebuilding my archaeological program was to better understand the social nature of learning in Inuit society. Both learning and teaching in traditional Inuit

cultures are based around a concept of 'ihuma,' a mental faculty roughly translatable to western understandings of 'reason,' which allows for individuals to interact with their surrounding environment and community in a way that conforms to social expectations. Individuals are not born with this capacity; until the age of 3 or 4, a child is usually not considered responsible for their actions because they lack ihuma, which can only be gained through watching and learning from positive examples being conducted in their environment. The teaching of ihuma is subtle, with every lesson showing deference to personal agency by embedding knowledge in a practical context so as to allow the individual to find their own path towards the wisdoms being conveyed. To maintain a rigid academic agenda is to flounder under such a system. A western approach to teaching favouring directed questions and narrowly-focused investigation is perceived by many Inuit as inhibiting an individual's ability to develop 'reasonable' answers based on a combination of firsthand observation, practical engagement and existing societal values. To pursue a subject to the exclusion of personal experience and surrounding social and environmental context characterizes one as fixated, or 'ihumaquqtuuq' (one possessing too much reason), a state often considered to be both socially oppressive and undesirable. The contrast between this approach to learning and that typically employed in the discipline of archaeology—which prioritizes concentrated studies of material culture to build images of a socially and personally disconnected past—is easily apparent.

The inability (and unwillingness) of many Inuit to adapt to non-Inuit styles of education is evidenced in part by the bleak statistics that continue to plague high-school attendance and graduation rates in Nunavut. While speaking to teachers in Cambridge Bay about this trend, another query previously ignored by my curriculum began to emerge: What physical and social environments are amenable to historical learning in the Arctic? Many Inuit are sceptical regarding the potential for students to learn traditional knowledge and skills within the confines of Nunavut classrooms. As Cambridge Bay elder, Tommy Kilaodluk, pointed out to me (pers. comm. 2008):

Having children out on the land without pen and paper, they learn more about Inuit culture...From the time you are young, starting from babies growing up, you cannot learn to be on the land on a schedule, in a week or in a month. It is not a 9 to 5 thing. It would be a good thing to learn out on the land without a clock or watch. It is not how you learn the Inuit way...We must be on the land year round to feel what it is like. If you are in class all day, your vision is vague.

I began to wonder whether learning about the past through on-site archaeological excavations did not present a similar challenge. Despite removing individuals from the classroom, excavation promotes an equally structured and scheduled experience of learning. Field seasons limit historical investigation to one month periods in the summer. The methods and logic of excavation are pre-determined according to standards and priorities that few local people understand. The balance of narrative authority is also fundamentally slanted, allowing newcomers to the Arctic to lecture lifelong residents about the history of their people. While archaeological excavation is often enjoyed by Inuit communities and considered useful as a source for producing artifacts, it does not by default mean that it can be considered an integral source for understanding history in the Arctic. I began to look at more emic situations in which concepts of history were being engaged. These ranged along a wide spectrum of activities, from hunting trips on the land to more urban practices of cribbage games and skidoo repair. Inuit can sew a pair of mitts or even make tea in a way that invokes tradition and history. Rather than emerging from the study of the unknown (whether buried artifacts or temporally distant populations), many Inuit revive the past through the familiar: daily contexts of practical experience, environmental exposure, the transferring of information between socially known and trusted sources. The theme of sensual connection to history repeatedly emerged from these situations in a way that was absent from the practice of excavation. While the physical act of rebuilding a traditional kayak or tool could be conceptually linked to ancestors doing the same tasks in the past, meticulous trowel work and measuring to uncover the same buried objects found no resonance with ideas of ancestry. As Arctic archaeologist Daniel Gendron once told me (pers. comm. 2011), for many Inuit "the past is something very alive, or something they want to keep

alive, so the best way to keep something alive is to do it. Digging holes is not part of the tradition.”

The third, and perhaps most important, question I began asking of my work was why history is considered important in the Arctic. For most archaeologists, knowledge production is a goal in and of itself during investigations of the past. For many Inuit, however, history is a source of potential identity. If engaged through specific socially and culturally sanctioned ways, history functions as an important conceptual bond that positions individuals within a temporal continuum central to understandings and definitions of Inuit identity. As Jessica Kotierk, a young Inuk woman visiting Cambridge Bay, informed me (pers. comm. 2012), understandings of being Inuit are not built from abstract understandings of the past, but through actively recognizing yourself in both old and new traditions:

I think you kind of figure out what Inuit means by looking at Inuit history, by saying “that is me, that is me” even though they [the traditions] are from different communities, you can be like, “this is what we have in common and it is what binds us all together, not just me individually.” I want to know what defines all of us, what is that common thing...I want to know what my father grew up with that I am not growing up with, that will help me understand what these people around me are going through that I wasn't there for.

The history course that resulted from four years of working with the community of Cambridge Bay was a far cry from the neatly scripted pages of the original curriculum (Griebel 2013). While largely incomparable to my earlier approach of excavation, the final program's differences can be broadly summed up through four categories of change. Firstly, the course downplayed the act of excavation as a means to understand the past. Its emphasis shifted from determining what tools people used in the past to understanding the experience of revitalizing, using, and documenting those same technologies in the present. Replicas were created from antiquated tools, and shaped into new displays and museum exhibits based on students' own experiences and insights gained through interaction. An extinct style of regional kayak was revived and rebuilt from materials and animals harvested from the land. The stone outline of an 800 year old community dance hall was re-imagined and re-constructed as a

performance centre and theatre based on discussions of how Inuit communities once worked and continue to work today. While excavation-derived materials and knowledge continued to be incorporated, the voice of archaeology became one of many used to interpret the past and its importance to contemporary society.

The second way that the course changed is that its schedule became more applicable to the Northern environment. Learning took place through a series of workshops spread throughout the year rather than a curriculum built to accommodate summer excavation. Workshops arose in response to seasonal timing: an igloo building camp was arranged for March, when proper snow conditions were present; a coastal kayak building camp was arranged for the month when seal were available for harvest and the Arctic char gathered to spawn. Workshops similarly responded to the social environment, fluctuating in response to the community: a collective desire to revitalize specific traditional technologies gave birth to new directions of workshop; the death of a community member resulted in certain projects being cancelled or postponed out of respect.

The third way in which the education program became altered was in relation to the topics it explored. Workshops were shaped by local desires to engage history outside of temporal boundaries through more enduring themes of identity, heritage, ancestry, and culture. Rather than investigating material remains as something in and of the past, the work saw them as tools in and for the present. The project to reconstruct an ancient community dance hall, for example, became a group meditation on community as a desired state, and the contemporary challenges that prevented this. Projects focused on traditional tool use became a venue for people to heal from the destructive legacy of residential schooling.

The final change to the history course was in terms of its membership. While formerly restricted to a dynamic of high school students learning from an archaeological 'authority,' the workshops came to include participants from the entire spectrum of the community—elders, youth, Inuit, non-Inuit, hunters, and those with little to no experience on the land. By engaging learning as a process of practical engagement informed by many perspectives and many different people, participants were allowed to navigate their own understandings of history, as well as its communicated values and place within the framework of modern Inuit life.

The underlying reality of archaeological education in the Arctic is that it continues to be conceived according to academic interests and methodologies. Put bluntly by Peter Nabokov (2002:239), “we feel freer to question whether we should even be speaking of indigenous senses of the past as alternative histories or alternatives to history. Instead of cramming them into familiar paradigms, might we not temper the hegemony of Western historiography by interpreting it into them every now and then?” While excavation continues to have a place in Arctic education, it needs to be situated within a greater cultural framework that encourages young people to see the past as a source of identity, community and values, all of which dramatically impact their contemporary lives.

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TEACHING THE CANADIAN NORTH: A NORTHERN ONTARIO PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In 2006, after working in Northern Ontario for about 25 years, I was asked to teach a half course on “Geography of Northern Canada”. Seven years later I’m still teaching the course, as a sessional professor, at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. Reflecting on ‘Teaching the Canadian North’ requires an examination of ‘Teaching (In) the North’ and the importance (or not) of location. It also requires some discussion on the interdisciplinary nature of teaching about the North and the importance of studying northern images. Canadian students need an understanding of northern issues and impacts which is based on interdisciplinary literatures and images. Due to the expenses and time required for on-site learning, they will likely need to gain this understanding without ever visiting the North. Our goal must be to make the North ‘real’ for them, while at the same time encouraging them to both examine past images of the North, and to imagine what ‘North’ means to them.

THE IMPORTANCE (OR NOT) OF LOCATION

To give an idea of ‘how far north’ Sudbury is, it takes four hours to drive south to Toronto or almost seven hours to drive southeast to Montreal. Many of the students in my classes have never travelled or lived farther north than Sudbury. They consider this ‘quite far enough’ in terms of northern travel and northern studies. This presents an interesting perspective as my Northern Geography course focuses on the Subarctic and Arctic, yet Sudbury’s latitude places it south of the Subarctic.¹ Last year, for the first time, I not only asked students to state how far north they had travelled, but I also invited them to write down how far south they had been. It was notable that many of the students had been to the Caribbean, to Florida, to Europe, or even around the world—but not to the Subarctic or Arctic.

This illustrates the dual problem of location: the location of both teachers and students. Teaching about the North requires us to position ourselves as researchers or professors within our own experience of the North. I know that when I teach northern geography, I am relatively comfortable talking about small northern mining or logging towns because I have lived and worked in the North for over 30 years. I am, however, not as comfortable teaching about the Arctic as I have only visited it once. (I travelled to Arviat in Nunavut when this hamlet was still Eskimo Point, Northwest Territories.)

I realize that someone who lived or worked in Arviat likely feels more comfortable lecturing on the Arctic, and may (or may not) have the opposite comfort level to mine with the Subarctic.

Students who live and learn in the Sudbury area certainly have a better understanding of the North than those who have never ventured 'north of the 401 highway' but I suggest that they still need to stretch their learning and experience farther afield. But do teachers, or students, really have to travel to, or live in, a locality in order to be able to understand it? Travelling throughout both the Subarctic and Arctic is obviously the ideal background work for a teacher. However, such travel is out of reach for many teachers and the majority of students. The expense and time required to travel north is considerable, if not immense. Both teachers and students find it easier to travel east or west across Canada, and further south than they do to travel north. What does this mean? It means that teachers and students, like most Canadians, are to a certain extent strangers in their own land, even if that land is the northern part of the province they live in.²

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF TEACHING ABOUT THE CANADIAN NORTH

When I first started teaching Northern Geography, a friend of mine at Laurentian University said "Make sure your students map **all** of the Arctic Islands and **all** of the northern rivers." I thought about it but I couldn't quite follow through. Primarily this was because I started my working career in a resource town in Northwestern Ontario and I felt it was more important for students to understand the personal experience of living in the North than to memorize physical features and locations. However, to be realistic and effective, there has to be an interdisciplinary approach to studying and teaching about the North. This includes map work and naming of some of the islands, rivers and lakes in the North. After all, what kind of Northern Geography course would not require students to find the Mackenzie River, or Ellesmere Island? Students sometimes ask me "Is this Human Geography or Physical Geography?" My answer is that you can't understand Human Geography—the lives of both indigenous and non-indigenous people in the North—unless you have some understanding of the physical base of the North—its climate, geology and vegetation. However, instead of memorizing the bands of continuous and discontinuous permafrost, or temperature gradients,

my class discusses the physical difficulty of building houses and pipelines in permafrost areas and the mental strain of surviving short winter days.

Part of an interdisciplinary approach involves looking at the recent history of the North, that is; the World War Two era and the Cold War. I contend that this timeframe has received too little attention in classes about Northern Canada. Students are aware of the fur trading era and they have studied European explorers but they seem to have little background on military development of the North in the 20th century. As an example, many students seem to see World War Two as solely impacting Europe or Asia, even though military development was the basis for northern megaprojects like the Alaska Highway, the Crimson Line airfields and the Canol Pipeline. Most students do not know that 80% of the Alaska Highway is situated in Canada and that this was a project whose impetus was the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. As part of teaching about Northern Canada, my students map the Alaska Highway and write about the positive and negative impacts of wartime megaprojects.

Most students have also not been exposed to the impact of the Cold War on Northern Canada. They tend to be aware of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis and they have usually heard about the Distant Early Warning Line (D.E.W. Line). They don't know that there were two other radar lines built across Canada in the 1950's. The Mid-Canada Line (McGill Fence) and the Pinetree Line, which include over 50 radar bases stretching from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador, do not seem to be part of the curriculum in high schools. This is unfortunate as radar bases were often situated near northern towns and they had positive and negative impacts ranging from increased employment to environmental contamination. Teaching about the Canadian North always includes material on energy and resource developments, mines and forestry operations. However, the dozens of radar base sites and communities across the North have been ignored until recently. Only in the past decade have historians and geographers, like P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Matthew Farish, opened the door to a broader discussion about how military operations and settlements/bases have affected northern people and northern physical environments.³ My students read papers by these professors and are required to prepare briefing notes on both World War Two and Cold War issues. I try to emphasize to students that although

World War Two and the Cold War may seem like ‘ancient history’ (i.e. an era before most of them were born), we are still cleaning up radar bases constructed during that time.

NORTHERN IMAGES

Teaching about the Canadian North includes people and communities, and war. It also includes conveying an understanding of images of the North, particularly prior to development of the Subarctic and Arctic. Mid-twentieth century images of the Canadian North ranged from: a huge, distant and unpopulated landscape; ‘a Man’s Country;’ a cold and snowy Arctic region; and a hinterland overflowing with mineral resources. In 1949, Hugh Keenleyside described the North as a “vast domain” with people living in “half-forgotten isolation.”⁴ Government booklets from the 1950’s also referred to the North as “an immense land.”⁵ These publications tended to refer to the North as “a man’s country,” and to indicate that the North was “no place for the weak and the unskilled.”⁶ R.A.J. Phillips added to the image of a sparse population by indicating that the farthest reaches of the North (the high Arctic) were “no man’s land.”⁷ A further recurring image of the North is that it ‘exist[ed] in order to be mined’ and that it was a mineral storehouse. J. Lewis Robinson’s 1944 “An Outline of the Eastern Arctic: Its Geography, Peoples and Problems” is one of the more striking examples of how northern regions were viewed as important only if they held mineral potential. A similar image of the North is that it can be turned into a “cloned” version of southern Canada.⁸

A final image of the North is that it is a “region of the mind” which is culturally and artistically constructed.⁹ In her text *Canada and the Idea of North*, Sherrill Grace indicates that the concept of “North” is “... gendered, raced, and classed; it permeates all aspects of our culture, from painting to comic strips, from politics to classical music.”¹⁰ Grace’s analysis of northern literature encompasses authors from Gabrielle Roy and Joseph Boyden to Farley Mowat and Pierre Berton. It’s hard to imagine Canadian students gaining a good understanding of the North without reading some of these books. Whether the books are fictional or not is not the issue. What is important is that this literature shaped the views of many Canadians about the North.

Sherrill Grace uses Glenn Gould’s symphony “Idea of North” as an example of integrating differing viewpoints or

images of the North.¹¹ She describes how Gould inserted voices, rather than musical notes, into his score for the *Idea of North*. The voices Gould used were from different disciplines, that is; the voice of a nurse was inserted at the beginning of the symphony, followed by the voice of a sociologist, and then overlaid with conversations between a civil servant, a surveyor and an anthropologist/geographer. Gould emphasized that he was merging the diverse images of the North by naming his symphony the “Idea of North” rather than the “Ideas of North. Gould’s and Grace’s interdisciplinary vision of the North are to me the essence of teaching about the Canadian north.

The importance of placing northern images into the teaching of ‘Canadian North’ is that it helps students understand how politicians and planners developed Northern Canada. As D. A. West writes “it has long been recognized that one’s perception of an area or region will influence one’s desired use for that space.”¹² Developers, both civilian and military, visualized the North as vast, empty, virtually unpopulated, and ready to be changed into a version of the south. These images of the North resulted in impacts on people, communities and landscapes and they continue to shape how we deal with northern issues such as Arctic sovereignty.¹³

Canadian students need an understanding of northern issues and impacts which is based on interdisciplinary literatures and images. Due to the expenses and time required for on-site learning, they will likely need to gain this understanding without ever visiting the North. Our goal must be to make the North ‘real’ for them, while at the same time encouraging them to both examine past images of the North, and to imagine what ‘North’ means to them. After all, if current economic trends continue, it is quite probable that southern Canadian students may find work in northern Alberta and the Territories rather than in the south. Let’s hope that our teaching helps prepare them for their new northern lives.

In the end, was location enough for me? No, it wasn’t. After several decades of working in the North, I decided to retire and go back to school. I felt that I didn’t have enough background in the theory of northern development, so I enrolled in an interdisciplinary PhD program at Laurentian University. The program—Human Studies—allows me to read and write about the broad spectrum of issues affecting the North. It also allows me to do my PhD research in an area that I feel needs some exploration. So

here I am in Sudbury, studying the Pinetree Radar Line, but my case study is much further north. It is the small Cree community of Moosonee which hosted a Pinetree radar base from 1961 to 1975.

As a well-respected Professor said some years ago “The North has much to learn from the Far North.”¹⁴ I live in the North, I teach about Northern Canada, and I know that what we can learn from, and about, the North is boundless.

NOTES

- ¹ R. M. Bone, *The Canadian North: Issues and Challenges* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2012). This is the main textbook that I use to teach Northern Geography. It begins with a map of Subarctic and Arctic Canada which shows the Sudbury area as south of the Subarctic.
- ² Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada's Provincial Norths* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1992): 1.
- ³ P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Matthew Farish. “The Cold War on Canadian Soil: Militarizing a Northern Environment.” *Environmental History* 12 (October, 2007): 920-50. See also Arn Keeling. “Born in an Atomic Test Tube: Landscapes of Cyclonic Development at Uranium Lake, Saskatchewan.” *Canadian Geographer* 54(2) (2010): 228-252.
- ⁴ Hugh L. Keenleyside, “Recent Developments in the Canadian North,” *Canadian Geographical Journal* 39(4) (1949): 173. (Note: Keenleyside was the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources in 1949).
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- ¹⁰ Sherrill Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007): 15.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*: 12-14.
- ¹² West: 109.
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TEACHING THE NORTH: THE CURIOUS BUSINESS OF BEING INSIDE-OUT

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ABSTRACT

Today's North—the international Arctic—needs citizens with a broad grasp of the circumpolar picture, who understand its common problems and who share a basic orientation and vocabulary. The capable northern citizen is emerging from the region itself, from northern institutions that are self-consciously nurturing and educating their region's peoples for a life lived with choice and by choice in the region. Where northern institutions might have begun by external fiat as deliberate agents of development, northern institutions today have achieved a kind of devolution of their institutional world view and are more and more able to take their own region's pulse and respond to their own region's needs. Teaching Northern Studies may be a curious business. Northern Studies at Yukon College today are about us, but it's an "us" that lives in a wider region. My Northern Studies today are circumpolar, multinational, multilingual, multiethnic, and multidisciplinary. So are my students and so are their questions. My Northern Studies are Circumpolar Studies.

Some northerners like to think of themselves as being tucked away in the North, "inside" as it is, or at least separate and separated from the world "Outside." They are in "the North," a fuzzy sort of space that is as much an imaginary construct as it is a geographical region. It is, nevertheless, a real place and the people who inhabit it are "northerners." If it is hard to say what is North, northern, or "inside," it is very easy to identify what is Outside. It lies beyond the zone of sporadic lodges on the north-flowing highways. Everything briefcase-toting, 24-hour, dress-code abiding and poncy is Outside.

That region-centric attitude has faded somewhat now, and the Internet probably had something to do with it. My sense, too, is that land claims implementation has contributed. As the North gained effective self-determination, there was less to fear from the experts with the briefcases and the PowerPoints. Increasingly, they are us. There are, of course, remaining pockets of that Inside/Outside thinking and the word is easy shorthand: "Did you go Out this summer?" "I was Out on medical." Times, however, have changed and the North isn't just "the North" anymore. Increasingly, it's "the Arctic." It's not just our North anymore. Increasingly, it's the world's "Circumpolar North." We've been supersized. The North-here is now also the North-there and Outside isn't something we can hope to ignore.

Today's North—the international Arctic—needs citizens with a broad grasp of the circumpolar picture, who understand its common problems and who share a basic orientation and vocabulary. In the old days this was generally understood as having the capacity to participate in northern development—by which it was usually meant that there would be northerners who could be hired to drive the trucks. These days the idea of who and what we need to participate in “sustainable development” is so much broader, so much more diverse. The capable northern citizen is emerging from the region itself, from northern institutions that are self-consciously nurturing and educating their region's peoples for a life lived with choice and by choice in the region. Where northern institutions might have begun by external fiat as deliberate agents of development (see Graham, 1997), northern institutions today have achieved a kind of devolution of their institutional world view and are more and more able to take their own region's pulse and respond to their own region's needs.

From its inception, the Northern Studies program at Yukon College has aimed to be relevant and useful, not just to the students in the courses it teaches but to the wider community through its graduates. When it actually opened its doors to students, though, it was a modest affair but one committed to form competent graduates. As events unfolded in the Arctic, the Northern Studies program adjusted and broadened its scope and content. In the paragraphs that follow, I would like to talk about Northern Studies at Yukon College and with the University of the Arctic, and about how we came to be inside out and are, thereby, contributing to a new New North.

NORTHERN STUDIES, OR WHAT TO MAKE OF THE NORTH

When the Yukon College Ayamdigut Campus opened in Whitehorse in 1988, it was momentous. Vision had met a construction crew on the road and put together a building that sat on the top of a hill, looked competent and luxuriated in room to grow. The parking lots optimistically expected hundreds of cars and classrooms expected 20s and 30s of students. In 1994, the late Aron Senkpiel, founding dean of the Yukon College University Transfer Division (later Arts and Science) wrote an account of the first thirty years of post-secondary education in the Yukon for a special issue of *The Northern Review* on northern education. He marked 1963 as the year post-secondary

education stated to take form, the year the Whitehorse Vocational Training School opened. It was astonishing, he mused, how quickly it had all developed. By 1983, the vocational school and a University of British Columbia teacher training program had been merged to create Yukon College.

In 1986, a consultant hired to develop a plan for education in the territory recommended that the government give Yukoners greater “options to stay” home for post-secondary education and training (Orlikow, 1986). The government did so by supporting the further development of Yukon College and its community campuses as a community college. In 1988, Yukon College in Whitehorse was set up in brand new and fabulous premises, and it was expected that its academic programs would be just as new and fabulous.

With the UBC program transferred to the college, the Arts and Science Division had “become the North's first autonomous university-level academic program” (Senkpiel, 1994, p. 101). The division's faculty proposed a brand-new suite of integrated diploma programs in Native Studies, Northern Science, and Northern Outdoor and Environmental Studies, collectively referred to as Northern Studies¹. It would be, the “first comprehensive, university-level northern studies program in Canada.” Crucially, it would “allow Northerners to do what people from other regions of the country could do: learn about their region while living in it” (Senkpiel, 1994, pp. 101-102).

The project was accepted and the College got funding and government support. The new college building was officially opened on 1 October 1988 and the Government gave the college a \$1 million gift to seed a permanent Northern Studies Research Fund. Tagish Elder Angela Sidney bestowed the campus name, Ayamdigut, a Tagish name meaning “she got up and went.” That fall, the first Northern Studies (NOST) students were taking general courses in Arts and Science. They would take their first Northern Studies courses in the 1989 Fall semester and the first graduates would be expected in 1990.

People had been studying the North for generations and had been more or less officially calling it “Northern Studies” for a decade or so. A distinction, however, should be drawn between studying the North in piecemeal fashion and doing Northern Studies as an integrated, multidisciplinary field. There was little precedent for the

latter. In 1994, the novelty of the field led historian Kenneth Coates to critique its limited explanatory framework. The North, he wrote, was “very much a conceptual wasteland.” Northern scholarship was being done, to its detriment, from “within the conceptual frameworks and intellectual paradigms of the Southern, or ‘outside,’ world” (Coates, 1994, p. 15). The questions and the interpretations had to come from within to give the findings necessary relevance.² That’s what we were doing and we seemed to be on the right track.

In building its new Northern Studies diplomas, the Arts and Science faculty, led by Aron Senkpiel, had to balance two opposing needs. The first was a need for good, solid, disciplinary courses, in fields such as Anthropology, History, Geography or Biology. In this regard, novelty was not an asset. The second was the need for genuine multi-disciplinarity. Courses in Northern Studies had to embrace multiple disciplinary lenses in order for the region, its lands and its peoples to be understood in all their wonderful complexity.

Courses were commissioned to fill the first need. To address that second need, multidisciplinary courses were developed in-house, with advice from content experts. The program proposal envisaged a two-year, 66-credit program, with four core courses (Technical Writing, Statistics, Research in the North, and Natural History of the North (for social sciences students) or Social History of the North (for natural science students)). Northern Studies and Liberal Arts courses filled the remaining 54 credits. The first disciplinary Northern Studies courses were in History, Geography, Political Science, Anthropology and Economics: History of the Canadian North, Circumpolar Geography, Constitutional Development of the North, Subarctic Ethnology, Subarctic Archaeology, Oral Traditions and Mythology, Regional Economies of the North. For the most part, the “North” of the title referred to the Canadian North.

Being multidisciplinary was particularly tricky, since it was not often taught at universities. As a proxy for teaching students to be capable of multidisciplinary thinking, the NOST programs aimed to have graduates become multi-disciplined by layering disciplinary knowledge on the multidisciplinary core. While the instructors of the courses were disciplinary experts, the students, through the experience of taking the intensive program, would emerge with a more multidisciplinary perspective on issues than their teachers. The graduates of

the program would be the first of a new kind of northerner, one who appreciated the complexity of northern issues and society and who had the ability to understand and speak the languages of a good cross-section of the North’s experts, from First Nations leaders³ to social and natural scientists who might have roles to play in the public sphere. The NOST graduate was an informed northerner.

THE PROBLEM WITH INFORMATION

In the first years of the Yukon College NOST program, it was a challenge to teach the North and particularly the North beyond Canadian borders. The biggest problem was a lack of good-quality and recent information. The Yukon College library had only limited holdings in the field, though it was actively developing its collection. Parks Canada had a library in town and the Yukon Archives was collecting Yukon material. Collections had been made sporadically, so the coverage was often spotty. To be sure, there were relevant journals: for example, *Arctic*, published by the Arctic Institute of North America (“unique multidisciplinary vehicle for a wide range of northern topics” (Harrison and Hodgson, 1987)), *Arctic Anthropology* from University of Wisconsin, *Musk-Ox* from University of Saskatchewan, and *Polar Record*, from Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University. Others, like *Fram* and *Acta Borealia* were less well known and hard to access. Academic journals had uneven coverage of relevant topics. The reality was that information, like pretty much everything else, had to come up the highway or by air and then, as now, budgets were tight. In addition, the Cold War kept a great deal of Soviet information out of the public sphere entirely and language made other material inaccessible. Faculty and students often had difficulty getting reliable information about any given topic.

Part of the solution was to create and publish our own scholarship. It was clear to two of the Northern Studies faculty members (N. Alexander Easton and Aron Senkpiel) that there was a niche for another northern journal. In their inaugural editorial article, “New Bearings on Northern Scholarship,” Senkpiel and Easton (1988) explained why they felt it was the right moment to launch a new journal. They were enthused by the expansion of research North of 60 since the 1970s in Canada occasioned by the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, the Alaska Highway pipeline, devolution, land claims negotiations, and were delighted by the creation of the two northern colleges

that they thought would serve as centres of production, consumption and distribution of northern knowledge. *The Northern Review* was conceived as a vehicle “to elucidate, as broadly as possible, human thought about and action in the North” (Senkpiel and Easton, 1988, p. 14). They wanted the journal to be a place where northern residents could engage in “the critical discussion of such issues as northern economic development” (Senkpiel and Easton, 1988, p. 15). The North they meant was “Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and the northern extremities of the provinces.” Their North, in 1988, was North American.

The founding editors had four reasons for *The Northern Review*. First, the journals already out there were publishing a fraction of the submissions they received, which reduced the chance that work by long-time Northerners would be published, especially if they lacked formal institutional affiliation. Second, none of the extant journals focused on “looking broadly at human thought about and activity in the North” (p. 22). Third, there was no scholarly journal being published in the territories and none “whose stated purpose is to develop what we call ‘indigenous northern scholarship’” (Senkpiel and Easton, 1988, p. 22). The last reason they gave for starting the journal was the enormous distance between the northern scholarly community (the southern academics) and its “subject of study”, that had led them to be “relatively ineffectual in developing the scholarly potential of northerners” (Senkpiel and Easton, 1988, p. 23).

The journal launched with a print run of 500; a “fragile beginning” according to the editors, “of a new expedition of sorts, an attempt to map the bewildering topography of this place here” (Senkpiel and Easton, 1988, p. 25). The *Northern Review* had its ups and downs, but has successfully overcome all challenges and will be publishing its 36th issue in December 2013. Its scope has broadened to include the circumpolar North; it is not limited to the North of North America as it has been in its beginning. It has become available online, has been open access for a year or more and has, over the years, dipped its toes into a broad range of disciplines. It is no longer the only journal of human-oriented northern studies, though it is, I believe, still the only one published north of 60 in Canada.

The information landscape now is very different. It would be the work of many pages to mention the sources and collaborations that have contributed so much to the discourse and the discovery of the circumpolar world in the past twenty years. I would be remiss, however, if I were to fail to mention the Fourth International Polar Year (IPY IV) in 2007-2008 and the ongoing work of newly developed international forums, national polar agencies, regional research bodies, Indigenous organizations, national and international NGOs, etc. The data and knowledge they have generated are an exciting resource for researchers of and in the North. This happy state of affairs has developed from those important international Arctic events I’ve mentioned here, but most notably, perhaps, through the creation of the Arctic Council and one of its projects, the University of the Arctic.

THE UARCTIC ‘R US

The idea of a University of the Arctic surfaced soon after the Arctic Council was established in 1996. After Canada and Sweden had submitted a proposal for “International Education and Training in the Arctic: A University of the Arctic,” the Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) was commissioned to explore the “concept of a circumpolar university” (Johnson, 1999, p. iii). The report (Heal, Langlais, and Snellman, 1997) imagined a University of the Arctic as “a higher education institution, focused on the environmental, cultural and economic integrity of Arctic regions” (p. 1). The university, through circumpolar cooperation, would “address the fundamental understanding of sustainable development” (p. 1). That report was accepted and the CUA was asked to form a working group to undertake a feasibility study. The report, “With Shared Voices,” was presented to the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in 1998.

The undergraduate Circumpolar Studies program would be the UArctic “flagship or signature program” (Poelzer, 2007, p. 31). This was significant because the more usual model is for specialist study to be reserved for the graduate level. As one example, in 1977, the Science Council of Canada recommended creating an “unorthodox” northern university that would consist of a graduate school and an extensions department “to provide a focus for the development of northern research activity explicitly designed to solve northern problems”

(p. 56). The suggestion of a graduate-level focus to start struck a nerve. The need in the Canadian North was for undergraduate teaching that would help build resident academic expertise. The broader aim for the UArctic was for citizens who were aware of being residents of the circumpolar North.

The educational program of the UArctic was, therefore, of particular importance to Yukon College. Aron Senkpiel had been championing a vision of accessible university options for Yukon and northern residents since he'd arrived in the Yukon in 1980 (see Graham, 2007). He was a tireless advocate for expanding the North's capacity to teach, learn, and enquire. "In the North, for the North and by the North," he'd say. That's what was important. The University of the Arctic offered the possibility of the leading northern institutions worldwide sharing their expertise and curriculum with Yukon College and its students. The UArctic was, and arguably continues to be, "one of the most ambitious attempts to address [the] challenge of creating access to university education in remote, northern communities" (Poelzer, 2007, p. 28). By being a member of this group, the hope was that Yukon College students, wherever they were, would be able to take courses online from any other UArctic-member institution. UArctic membership would require that courses shared would be treated as domestic for any degree residency requirements. That was the plan, and it is coming in spite of the fact that it has taken a long time to operationalize and we're not quite there. Four or five member institutions have offered a course online to UArctic-member students. We can hope for more in the future.

The Circumpolar Studies Program of the UArctic continues to be of great importance to Yukon College and its Northern Studies programs. The seven-course core is shared curriculum that any student may take, in their home institutions or in international online sections. The curriculum of the seven courses is supported by materials published by organizations like the Arctic Council Working Groups, and, more and more, by programs of the University of the Arctic (e.g., Northern Research Forum) and related projects (Arctic Year Book, for example). Moreover, those UArctic programs are the points of engagement for the member institutions and the 130-odd members can each pick the ones that are

most useful to them. Yukon College, for example, is a founding member of the UArctic, is involved with the north2north Student Mobility program and contributes teaching to the Circumpolar Studies Program.

Northern studies has benefitted enormously from nearly two decades of data, information and critical study of the North, from the North, for the North and for the world. We're awash in information and daily we have new ways to find it, access it, share it and teach it. Residents of the region now have more opportunities to connect than were dreamt of twenty or so years ago. The Internet has made communication and information dissemination easier, and the proliferation of organizations offers unprecedented opportunities for networking and best-practices-sharing. Circumpolar cooperation is national and international but it is also personal and interpersonal.

THE CURIOUS BUSINESS: CONCLUSION

Teaching Northern Studies has been something of a curious business. I wonder whether it is, in fact, possible to teach Northern Studies. Perhaps what I am really doing is creating space for students to "multidiscipline" themselves. I can imagine my Northern Studies experience as a journey from a narrow mountain valley to a broad plain. I have no way of knowing, of course, if my experiences resonate with anyone else. I do think, though, that there has been an evolution in what we mean when we say Northern Studies.

In 1988, Northern Studies was local and national, rarely international. It was, however, an opportunity to study the North as if it mattered, a homeland, as Thomas Berger termed it, and not as a frontier. It was exciting to put the periphery at the centre in our classrooms. We spent time drawing the boundaries of the North. Then we looked for new ways to explain our findings and experiences. We were able to do that in part because the Cold War ended and the Internet began and information flowed more freely. Eight Arctic nations agreed to talk about common issues and Indigenous people were invited to participate. We got into the practice of coordinating Arctic science and we had a circumpolar network of universities and other to contribute to the work, talk about it, disseminate it and teach it.

Teaching Northern Studies is, indeed, a curious business, one I would not trade for anything. Northern Studies at Yukon College today are still about us, but it's an "us" that lives in a wider region. The fences are down and the posts have been moved out a great distance. My Northern Studies today is circumpolar, multinational, multilingual, multiethnic, and multidisciplinary. So are my students and so are their questions. My Northern Studies are Circumpolar Studies. My homeland has become more inclusive. My world has become more diverse. My work has become more challenging. And my students will become more. Just more.

NOTES

- ¹ A program in Northern Justice and Criminology would be added later.
- ² This is a discussion that continues today: the parties are Indigenous peoples and academic researchers but the conversation is familiar.
- ³ However, the first graduates emerged before the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement was signed and the "First Four" First Nations governments were created

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TEACHER ENGAGEMENT WITH HISTORIES OF EDUCATION: SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN NUNAVUT

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ABSTRACT Using examples from Nunavut's social studies curriculum, this article illustrates that Nunavut has new expectations for teachers. When asked to teach new histories in new ways, how can teachers be better supported to link decolonizing approaches to learning and schooling, culturally responsive pedagogy, and reinterpretations of Canada's history? Engaging with Arctic histories of education can offer educators important avenues into this complex changing space. By opening a conversation about the relevance of local, regional and territorial histories of education, the intention is not only to help teachers understand what has happened in the educational past, but to enhance teaching and learning approaches that are culturally responsive, locally relevant, and supportive of community-driven visions for school change.

The history of our people, including the recent creation of Nunavut and the settlements of other Inuit claims is important information to know, for both our southern population and even more to our own Arctic youth. There is a huge desire to be inspired by strong pasts and strong people, we need to sing for our leaders, and dance for our accomplishments, and have courage because of our losses. We learn from all of it, become wiser because of them, and we learn to have hope because only then will we understand how much we've really survived.

And this instills pride in our country, our territory, and our people.

Stacey Aglok McDonald, 2009

And if we are to restore the trust of parents who have been deeply hurt by their own educational experiences, we must build an education system grounded in the Inuit culture, history and worldview, and with respect for the role of parents.

Mary Simon, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy & Canadian Inuit (hereafter referred to as *Staking the Claim* or *STC*) is a required grade 10 social studies module for Nunavut schools that examines the history of four Inuit land claims processes across Canada. One of the most unique aspects of the program is that it is based on a film of the same title that documents Inuit youth interviewing negotiators and leaders involved in the claims, seeking histories and experiences, and making connections between what they learn and their own lives. Combined with archival photos and other material, available in English and Inuktitut, the film is intended to be used throughout the module to support student learning activities. A range of issues, historical events, and collective and individual perspectives are examined, beginning with traditional Inuit lifeways, delving deeply into the difficult experiences of settlement and colonization, and tracing the pathways towards political mobilization, land claims and self-determination. Students are encouraged to engage with family and community members to learn about their experiences and memories from the time of the land claims process. The module finishes with an activity entitled “Fire in Your Belly” in which students identify ways they can make a difference in their own community, or participate in continuing the work of promoting Inuit cultural, linguistic and political vitality.

In addition to examining processes of colonization and decolonization in Canada’s history, the module clearly demonstrates the initiative, perseverance and leadership of two generations of Inuit – the older generation who struggled to bring about the Inuit land claims, and the younger generation who care about investigating and documenting their people’s history for the future.

This kind of social studies program development is crucial to creating more relevant and engaging learning experiences in the Nunavut education system. However, delivery of such programs also depends on the important question and challenge faced in Nunavut as well as across Canada: What approaches contribute to better preparing and supporting teachers to facilitate Indigenous education in culturally-responsive ways, particularly in schools in which a majority of students are Indigenous? My focus is on the use of educational history with teachers, and how that relates to the Nunavut requirement to provide schooling built on foundations of Inuit culture, language and worldview.

The vast majority of students in the public school system are Inuit, whereas most educators – particularly at the secondary level (grades 7-12) – are hired from outside of Nunavut. New teachers often arrive with a lack of familiarity regarding the place, people, and educational mandates. Teachers who come from within Nunavut are trained through the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, which places emphasis on instruction in the Inuit language at the elementary level. Only recently have efforts been made to create a special focus area for instruction at the middle school level (grades 7-9). Increasing the number of Inuit teachers and reducing the turnover of teachers overall would undoubtedly benefit the school system. However, all educators – regardless of their ethnicity, language skills, or where they grew up – require orientation, mentoring, professional development and support to move away from reproducing education practices emergent from colonizing, assimilative or Eurocentric traditions (that they themselves likely experienced as students). Understanding educational histories could contribute to shaping teachers’ capacity to facilitate a different kind of educational experience that is more responsive to Nunavut students. As I will discuss, Nunavut educational histories would focus on when and why schools were introduced, how education has or has not changed over time, what schools and educators have done (or not done) for Northerners, the experiences of students, educators and families participating in schools, and how the past influences what schools mean to communities now.

TEACHING INUIT LAND CLAIMS HISTORY IN NUNAVUT

Following publication of *Staking the Claim* in 2009 all educators in Nunavut were required to attend a one day in-service to raise awareness of this new program’s content and goals. This indicates the importance attributed to this history, as well as how crucial training and orientation initiatives are, in the Nunavut education system. The northern and Inuit content, as well as the pedagogical expectations of *STC*, make the necessary skills and approaches particularly important to consider in terms of preparing social studies teachers for program delivery. For example, the program includes:

- A clearly stated learning competency related to self-determination: “The overall goal of this module is to build student awareness of how Inuit once had, then lost, and are now regaining control over their lives and destinies” (p. 2);
- An expectation that teachers sensitively engage students’ families in learning about land claims history, including encouraging students to come up with questions with their families that they can work towards answering;
- Critical discussion about vocabulary and concepts such as ‘acculturation’ and ‘assimilation,’ surface culture and deep culture, empowerment and disempowerment;
- Exploring the concept of extinguishment of rights in which students are asked to compare the language in the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850 and consider how rights can be extinguished through such agreements.

The learning objective stated on page 50, unit 5, also summarizes the goals of the module overall:

Students will learn about the unequal relationship that developed between Inuit and the newcomers, and will reflect on that relationship in today’s context. They will be introduced to many examples of challenges Inuit had during the transitional times, which led to Inuit wanting a land claim. A large component of this unit will be to engage the community and to learn from people in the students’ communities who experienced these transitions.

In a letter to educators in the *STC* Teacher’s Guide, two non-Inuit educators who are experienced with instructing courses on Inuit land claims in a post-secondary context explain the significance of the module to teachers who are new to the material:

The story of what Inuit achieved within a mere three decades (i.e. from 1970 until 1999) represents one of the most inspiring stories in all of Canadian history. In many respects, it was Canada’s other ‘quiet revolution’. Helping Inuit youth to know this story – their own story – is

a service that will generate positive benefits for generations to come. At the same time, helping non-Inuit students to know this story will build cross-cultural respect among those who are also committed to building the future of Nunavut (Morley Hanson and Murray Angus, p. x).

An attempt is then made to soothe any potential concerns on the part of teachers who are encountering the history of Inuit land claims for the first time:

...you don’t have to be experts in Nunavut land claims or Inuit history to teach this material effectively; rather, this resource will guide you, and your students, through a process of learning based on knowledge that already exists within the community, supported by lesson plans, resource materials, and the three video documentaries. Your role, as teacher, will be to facilitate the learning process – a process that will invite students to engage with their parents and grandparents about a time of great change in Inuit society (p. x).

The likelihood that teachers will be unfamiliar with the module content and recent northern history is emphasized through this statement, but that is not the only reason teachers should be encouraged to see themselves differently in Nunavut classrooms. One can extrapolate that by asking teachers (often non-Indigenous teachers) to destabilize their role as ‘expert’ in local histories, they are recognizing and promoting the knowledge and experience brought into the classroom by students. This expectation places emphasis on the importance of pedagogical expertise rather than content expertise, particularly when a teacher is leading learning relating to the decolonization of land title and decision-making across the North. These points are reinforced from the perspective of a young Inuk who participated in creating the *STC* documentary and reviewing the module:

In Inuit traditions, the learner and the teacher are not fixed responsibilities, both must work together, and neither must be afraid of taking on the opposite role. I hope Staking the Claim will be a learning journey that both you and your students can embark upon and enjoy together

as a team, and I hope that this journey inspires you all to be as proud as I am to be a part of this spectacular piece of living Canadian history (Stacey Aglok McDonald, STC, p. viii).

Raising awareness amongst teachers regarding content in *STC* and reconsidering the teacher's function as a skilled and responsive pedagogue rather than a knowledge holder should not only be for the purpose of helping teachers to be more comfortable taking on an unconventional module. It should also be about unlearning and relearning the role of a teacher in Nunavut schools: becoming a teacher who can engage in the kind of meaningful, critical, decolonizing teaching and learning opportunities envisioned through *STC*, and to nurture an awareness of histories that are relevant to Inuit and Northerners in Nunavut.

THE PLACE OF HISTORY IN ENHANCING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS AND DECOLONIZING EDUCATION

Staking the Claim is a unique example of the movement towards reconceptualization of education in Nunavut. K-12 curriculum development and reform initiatives to better reflect the strengths and needs of Inuit have been underway for more than 20 years, and were significantly bolstered by the 2008 *Nunavut Education Act*. The *Act* is the first provincial or territorial education legislation that strongly represents the educational vision of an Indigenous population in the history of Canada.

Asking teachers to "fall in line" with new curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and other policies necessitates substantial training, mentoring and in-classroom coaching and modeling initiatives. In Nunavut, with 43 schools in 25 fly-in communities, this involves a high level of financial and human resources. As noted, the Department of Education has pursued this kind of in-service, for example at the time of implementing *STC*, but questions remain: Do teachers understand the intent behind Nunavut's education legislation, the goals related to curriculum change, and the connections between that history and a social studies module such as *STC*? How do teachers learn about facilitating a curriculum that is more culturally and locally responsive for Nunavut students?

Decolonizing schools depends on teachers coming to know that the history of education for Indigenous peoples in Canada has been, for the most part, a history of assimilation. It requires them to understand that Indigenous perspectives continue to be excluded or misrepresented in learning materials. And, persistent, normalized Eurocentrism is a barrier to educational change. In order to challenge and change dominant constructions of history and identity, teachers and students need exposure to Indigenous perspectives. It is not only differing perspectives on the same events that are needed, but differing contexts for history, and differing ways of making meaning from it that are more coherent with Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

Awareness of different histories could bring teachers and communities into dialogue about other things that may need to be viewed from different perspectives, such as everyday actions and relationships in schools. It is too easy to avoid seeing oneself as implicated in histories and, good intentions notwithstanding, reinscribe colonial relations. Practices of examining the past must be connected to ongoing, if sometimes invisible, colonial structures with which individuals are complicit, or to which they are subject. If teachers are being asked to help students describe and interpret the power differential experienced during the process of negotiating a land claim, they must be ready to engage with their own role in power differentials that may still exist within schools and in communities. This is not for the purpose of eliciting paralyzing guilt or other associated emotions (though emotions should be attended to), but to enter into explicit conversations about respectful relationships in schools that are informed by the social context as it has been shaped over time.

To this end, educators' engagement with educational history should feature local histories, histories that are informed by multiple perspectives, or histories that offer insight into the Inuit worldview. To explore the local history of education as a vehicle and starting point provides teachers with information about what has happened in their community, and facilitates opportunities for them to meet, listen to, and build relationships with people who have seen education unfolding and changing in Nunavut first-hand. It could also model pedagogies that are appropriate to learning in that community.

This may help form teacher perspectives in some important ways, such as: becoming more sensitive to local explanations for patterns of involvement or disengagement with schooling and therefore better able to participate in an inclusive learning and teaching community; becoming more informed and equipped instructional leaders for students who are trying to make sense of individual, family, local and global change in formal and informal learning journeys; and, becoming aware of positive educational changes, significant local initiatives and community strengths, so that such work can be recognized, nurtured and promoted within and outside the school.

EXISTING INITIATIVES IN NUNAVUT

There are several existing and anticipated opportunities for Nunavut educators to explore relevant histories of education. Principal and vice-principal candidates are required to attend the Nunavut Educational Leadership Program (ELP) for two weeks over two summers to attain certification. ELP is largely focused on supporting principals to oversee the reconceptualization of schooling and the system-wide reforms that have been underway. One of the central themes taught each year during ELP is “Roots: Transforming Education in Nunavut”, which typically incorporates a presentation on issues related to educational history such as local or regional oral history projects, a guest speaker or screening of a documentary about a particular aspect or event in Nunavut history, and individual activities related to engaging with each participant’s identity and positionality. ELP provides a model for activities that link the histories of education in Nunavut with educational change, and this kind of orientation and support must be expanded to reach all school staff. It is expected that a historical component will be included in an orientation program for all new Nunavut education staff, currently under development by the Department of Education and Nunavut Teachers’ Association.

Awareness of residential schools history is another important example of what Nunavut teachers need to participate effectively in a school system working towards change. The recently completed, ground-breaking module *The Residential School System in Canada: Understanding the Past – Seeking Reconciliation – Building Hope for Tomorrow* developed by Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Legacy of Hope Foundation, is doing

a great deal to orient teachers to the relationship between the educational past and present. In Nunavut this module is taught along with *STC* in grade 10. It facilitates complex critical discussions about both educational policy and lived experience of schooling across the North and Canada. Many former students of residential schools in Nunavut have voiced the importance of teachers and students being aware of this difficult past and contributed to development of the module. A 3-day intensive training workshop for grade 10 social studies teachers was offered at the time of the launch of this module, and system-wide awareness training is underway in Nunavut as well.

While I strongly advocate for teacher awareness of residential schools histories, discussion about the history of education in Nunavut can too easily be limited or simplified by a focus on residential schools. For example, the matrix of educational opportunities and their associated living arrangements that Inuit students had access to and experienced cannot be easily encapsulated by the generalized narrative of residential schools that now exists in the minds of many Canadians. Indeed, many students had positive and formative experiences at residential schools. Across Canada a focus on residential schools tends to overshadow the assimilationist policies and difficult experiences of day schools that have continued long past the residential approach. It is too easy to say that only in a class discussion on the most harrowing moments in our educational past should teachers be concerned about their position in relation to students and the colonizing forces of education. I have focused here on relating the history of education to delivering the land claims history module partly to try and draw the discussion outside of the residential schools context, and illustrate that decolonizing schooling is no less important when discussing other topics.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

What follows is a list of examples within three areas of educational history that are relevant to Nunavut educators and may be featured through enhanced programs connecting knowledge of the past with educational change in the present. This is not an exhaustive list, but an illustrative one that provides examples that I view as relevant to Nunavut communities. In addition to outlining existing and anticipated territory-wide initiatives above, I would like to recognize that initiatives or discussions on

the topics listed below may already be underway in some communities, or have been in the past; this is work that I hope will continue to be supported.

Foundational Themes:

- Traditional Inuit education and childrearing practices and how they have been adapted over time in response to social, economic, and other changes in Nunavut;
- The importance of relationships with the environment and wildlife, subsistence activities, traditional ecological knowledge and how they have changed;
- History of the relationship between Inuit and federal/territorial governments, including the role of education within welfare state interventions and land claim negotiations; and
- Recognition of myths, stereotypes and generalizations about Inuit and Indigenous peoples in education programs, and replacing them with access to individual voices, Elder/oral histories, multi-vocality, authorized biographies and documentaries.

Local Histories:

- Whether and when students from local/regional communities attended residential schools, federally-funded day schools and student hostels, including details regarding range of experiences, both negative and positive;
- The role of parents in educational decision-making such as the local timeline for creation of district education authorities, number of parents who work in the school (increases/decreases), and extent to which school programs have welcomed parent involvement; and
- Analysis of employment and post-secondary opportunities in the community over time and relationship between school programs and employment, or other resources external to the school itself.

Educational Change Stories:

- Number of Inuit educators who have worked in the school in the past and currently work in the school, perhaps including a canvassing of those teachers regarding the strengths and challenges they experience in delivering educational programs;
- Impact of local and territorial leadership development initiatives for school administrators, teachers and local education authorities (parent councils), including changes in support for such initiatives from the government;
- Documentation of successful programs that have led to student engagement or improved achievement, such as attendance incentives, co-op or apprenticeship programs or Elder involvement; and,
- Analysis of changes seen in student achievement as a result of increasing access to bilingual resources, introduction of new literacy pedagogies or increased number of school staff speaking Inuit language in classrooms.

CONCLUSION

Teachers cannot be expected to effectively bring decolonizing pedagogies and culturally responsive approaches associated with educational change into their classrooms for the benefit of Nunavut students, families and communities, without receiving significant initial and ongoing supports. Teachers also can no longer “make do” teaching Inuit students using approaches that do not make space for Inuit culture, language, worldview and values. I have used *STC* and social studies education as a site of reference to argue that an agenda, resources and programs for better educating *all* educators across all levels and subject areas in educational histories could form a generative component of educational change. Educational histories can play a role in addressing the legacy of Canada’s assimilative educational policies and practices, and provide a vehicle to better prepare teachers to facilitate culturally responsive learning using a range of pedagogies. It may support efforts to reconstruct

history and social studies education using Indigenous knowledge and approaches, and delivering relevant, exciting and critical-thinking learning programs. Opening a conversation about the relevance of histories of education is not only to call for initiatives that engage teachers in coming to understand what happened in the educational past, but also to enhance teaching and learning approaches that are culturally responsive, locally relevant, and supportive of community-driven visions for school change.

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TEACHING THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION

DAVID R. GRAY is an independent researcher, writer, and filmmaker, specializing in Arctic subjects, including Arctic parks, mammals, and history. His main research interests are the behaviour Arctic mammals and the history of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. As a researcher with the Canadian Museum of Nature for 20 years, he made annual research trips to the Canadian Arctic to study muskoxen, Arctic hares and red-throated loons. David has written two books on Arctic subjects (*The Muskoxen of Polar Bear Pass* and *Alert: Beyond the Inuit Lands*), and produced two Virtual Museum of Canada exhibitions (*Ukaliq: the Arctic Hare* in 2005 and *Northern People: Northern Knowledge* in 2003). In 2010-11 he was the curator of a major exhibition, *Expedition Arctic: 1913 – 1918*, for the Canadian Museum of Civilization. As a filmmaker, he directed *Arctic Shadows: the Arctic Journeys of Dr R. M. Anderson* (2010) and has directed and produced five recent films on early Sikh immigration from India to Canada: *Lumber Lions* (2013), *Dis-Immigration* (2013), *Canadian Soldier Sikhs* (2012), *Beyond the Gardens' Wall* (2010), and *Searching for the Sikhs of Tod Inlet* (2009).

ABSTRACT

The Canadian Arctic Expedition is a hidden jewel in Canada's buried history treasure chest, just waiting to be unearthed and shared within the country and with the very interested world.

The resources available to bring to light this great Expedition are second to none, with thousands of photos, film footage, personal diaries and scientific reports. The Expedition abounds in good true stories. It is a wonderful vehicle for teaching science, geography, culture and history. It is an educational treasure just waiting for new resources to allow it to be discovered and used.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918 was the first Canadian government expedition to the western Arctic and at the time, the largest multi-disciplinary scientific Arctic expedition ever mounted. It was an important event in Canada's history and the young country gave it appropriate enthusiastic support, anticipating what would prove to be true, that this expedition would have a profound impact on the world of science, and on the people of the north, an impact that continues to this day. As well, a world intrigued with Canada's mysterious and little known north, waited and watched with great interest for revelations about the land and its people.

The Canadian Arctic Expedition (CAE) has slipped out of the Canadian consciousness, overshadowed even on its return by World War One. Few people today know anything about the Expedition, though Stefansson, commander of the CAE, is a familiar name to some. Although the CAE was recognized as an event of national significance in 1925, the first arctic event to be so recognized, this designation was subsequently lost, and only restored in recent years.

BACK TO THE PAST

At the time of the CAE, world newspapers followed the progress of the Expedition in detail. In June 1913, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the *Titanic's* sister ship, RMS *Olympic*, even reported the launch of the CAE in the onboard newspaper:

“Arctic Expedition. Victoria, British Columbia. The Canadian Arctic expedition, which is seeking an unknown continent in the north, sailed yesterday from Esquimalt. The Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Patterson, and the Premier, Sir Richard McBride, bade an official farewell to the party.”

This was obviously a major Canadian event accompanied by great excitement in Victoria. Yet this Expedition dropped out of our history and remains unknown to most Canadians.

It's not as though there has been no information available about the Expedition. Many volumes of scientific reports were published. Expedition journals and private diaries are safely stored at Library and Archives Canada, along with thousands of Expedition photographs and amazing CAE film footage. Several books were published not long after the Expedition as well.

Stefansson's book, *The Friendly Arctic*, of 1921, was a popular account of the Expedition, though it featured little of the scientific exploration, and was mostly about Stefansson's own interests in geographical exploration. The CAE reports, published between 1919 and 1946, were popular among scientists with many hundreds of copies requested, but they only reached that academic audience.

Expedition anthropologist, Diamond Jenness, the most prolific writer among the Expedition scientists, also wrote two popular accounts of his experiences: *The People of the Twilight* 1928 and *Dawn in Arctic Alaska* 1957.

But except for arctic enthusiasts, and those engaged in arctic studies, these resources are not widely known or used. Most information on the CAE for the general public, and especially for children, has focused on the sinking of the Expedition flagship, the *Karluk* and the loss of eleven men. Disasters always receive more attention than the more substantial but less exciting events.

Other more recent academic and popular books have focused on Stefansson's life and accomplishments, and neglected the CAE scientists.

CAE member William McKinley's book; *Karluk, The Great Untold Story of Arctic Exploration* (1976) re-raised the issues and the controversies over leadership that dogged the CAE.

Today we finally have resources that tell more of the CAE story. Stuart Jenness, son of Diamond Jenness, first published his father's expedition diary (*Arctic Odyssey*) in 1991, then the story of Expedition photographer, Sir Hubert Wilkins (*The Making of an Explorer*) in 2004, and in 2011 the first comprehensive account of the entire CAE (*Stefansson, D' Anderson and the Canadian Arctic Expedition*).

In the last ten years, the CAE has become more widely known through other newer and increasingly popular media.

In 2003 I worked with the Canadian Museum of Civilization to develop an online virtual museum exhibition called *Northern People, Northern Knowledge: the Story of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918*, for the Virtual Museum of Canada. This virtual exhibition continues to attract visitors and is being promoted again in this anniversary year. www.civilization.ca/hist/cae

In 2009 the International Polar Year funded my proposal to research and produce a 1-hour documentary film on D' R. M. Anderson, Head of the Southern Party of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. The film; *Arctic Shadows: the Arctic Journeys of D' R. M. Anderson*, was screened at the IPY Film Festival in Ottawa in 2009 and Inuvik in 2011, and at the *Arctic Film Festival* in Minnesota, USA in 2012. Sales at the Canadian Museum of Civilization made it their most popular DVD. www.arcticshadows.ca

In 2008 I proposed an exhibit on the Canadian Arctic Expedition to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, originally as an International Polar Year project. Approval and funding came several years later and the major exhibition: *Expedition Arctic 1913-1918*, opened at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in April 2011.

The exhibition received an Honourable Mention in the 2011 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Museums – History Alive! Award. After a year at the CMC, the traveling version of the exhibition is now being shown across Canada. www.civilization.ca/arctic/blog

THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR 2013

Now, in 2013, Canada is commemorating the 100th anniversary of the launch of this great Expedition. In the nation's capital, colourful CAE banners fly along the ceremonial route along Parliament Hill and into Gatineau, Quebec. Other quiet celebrations include the production of commemorative CAE coins by the Royal Canadian Mint. But what is so far lacking in this centennial year is new research and new teaching about this awesome piece of Canadian heritage.

The Department of Canadian Heritage identified the "Centennial of the start of Canadian Arctic Expedition" as one of the "Key Milestone Anniversaries on the Road to 2017," the year of Canada's 150th Birthday.

In announcing a Virtual Museum of Canada grant to the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, the Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq noted that the new investment would help ensure that "information on the Canadian Arctic Expedition, one of Canada's significant historical events, [is] accessible to all Canadians." The funding is to "help preserve the history of the Copper Inuit (Inuinait) and commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Canadian Arctic Expedition." Though it is a significant acknowledgement of the celebration of the CAE's anniversary by Heritage Canada, the forthcoming VMC exhibition is more about the Copper Inuit than the CAE.

Heritage Canada has also provided a supporting grant to *Students on Ice* for their educational Arctic expeditions with a focus and teaching on the CAE for the next three years. Through this program, we will be teaching the 75 students who will travel north each year, the basics of the CAE through the on-board lecture program and increasing their awareness through special workshops introducing cultural and scientific objects linked to the CAE.

My own independent proposal for original field research, a documentary film, and a new website on the CAE received no financial support from the federal government, and it appears that no new federal funding was designated specifically for the CAE commemoration.

Therefore, we turned to a crowd-funding campaign to raise the necessary funds for a commemorative expedition to Banks Island, to begin the re-tracing and documenting, for the first time, of the routes of the CAE and their established camps.

The 2013 CAE campaign was called "The White North has thy Bones," a quote from Lord Tennyson's tribute to Sir John Franklin, and a reference to our quest to find the remains of Captain Peter Bernard of the CAE, who was lost in the winter of 1916, and never found. This catchy title was necessary to grab people's attention from the thousands of other competing film proposals on the Indiegogo site. We worked hard to get the multimedia coverage rolling. Fortunately an independent writer for Canadian Press picked up our new CAE story, and his article appeared in newspapers across the country. So the crowd-funding campaign actually did more to raise the CAE profile than we could have imagined. Not only did newspapers pick up the story, but national radio and television covered it as well. This is when the real public education element of the Expedition began.

CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION 2013

Our 2013 expedition was planned to locate, map, film, and officially document sites where the CAE established camps and caches along the west coast of Banks Island. None of these sites have ever before been properly mapped or documented by historians. Coastal erosion due to decreased ice has put these sites at risk as artifacts and structural elements are being washed away. Filming at these sites would be a key component of our planned documentary film on the Canadian Arctic Expedition.

We spent most of our time at the site of the major camp of the Northern Party of the CAE used between 1914 and 1917. The site is located at Mary Sachs Creek, just west of the community of Sachs Harbour. Here we measured, documented and filmed the foundations of the CAE huts built in 1914, the scattered remnants of the Expedition's schooner *Mary Sachs*, and many artifacts exposed on the surface of the large site.

Unfortunately, 2013 featured the worst ice conditions for the past seven years. Most of coastal Banks Island remained ice-choked through August. Even the ship we were to sail up the coast in, the *Bernard Explorer*, couldn't cross the Northwest Passage to meet us at Sachs harbor because of ice. Only by traveling overland by ATV was it possible to reach four of the ten CAE sites we had hoped to document. Yet the summer's expedition was very worthwhile, both in terms of research and teaching.

The new technology of communicating via satellites, using a donated inReach device and i-phone allowed us to show our location and movements on a map seen on our website. A daily blog allowed us to teach as we explored. We could show photos of artifacts we found and explain their use in the context of the CAE camp of 100 years ago. Our followers became involved with the hunt and celebrated our discoveries. Thanks to this medium, our contributors and followers became part of the expedition team.

When we attempted to navigate through the ice by outboard motor boats when our sail boat couldn't reach us, our followers could see the packed ice and understand the impossibility of navigation. When we then went overland in ATVs, our followers came too, following our progress on the website map, seeing photos and reading the daily blogs.

Limited by the need to carry our own gas, we were not able to reach the most northerly camps, and we had no hope of reaching the island camps, were we just might have found the "bones" of Captain Bernard. Nevertheless, with the kind of immediate communication that the new media devices allow, educating about the CAE really came alive. Real excitement was being generated about the Canadian Arctic Expedition as we travelled the same land, and camped alongside their old camp sites.

Working with the people of Sachs Harbour, many of whom have direct connections with the CAE, was part of the teaching experience. We gave tours of the Mary Sachs site and shared stories and photos of the early history of the island from our knowledge of the CAE. In turn we learned more of individual and family histories and how they too relate to the CAE. This sort of sharing of information brought a great feeling of cooperation and working together to research and teach the CAE.

The 2013 expedition has also led to a new teaching project which involves working with NWT Tourism and the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee to produce a booklet on the history of Sachs Harbour and Banks Island, focusing on the CAE and its legacy. This project will increase tourism potential by teaching the story of the CAE and its legacy to general public, and demonstrate how tourists can experience this amazing history for themselves.

FUTURE PROJECTS

We have not done well in the past at teaching the CAE to the Canadian students. School curricula across Canada provide some encouragement to consider Arctic and Inuit history, but none specifically mention the CAE

The production of an Educational Guide to the CAE to help teachers would be an important addition to our website. Teachers appreciate such guides, which offer a time-line, major accomplishments, photos, links, and project ideas. A guide will encourage teachers to include a unit on the CAE in their teaching.

Recent studies confirm what seems apparent, that young people looking for information on history use the internet first and books a distant second. Older people use the two sources about the same. Newspapers, TV and magazines are far less used as sources.

TEACHING IN THE NORTH USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

In Canada's north, though Elders may still use single side band radios and the trappers' frequency to communicate while out on the land, satellite phones and other new satellite-based technologies are becoming more common. In the same way, how information is acquired in the North is changing too. Many northern people rely largely on Facebook, not only for chat and social communication, but also as a way of discovering and sharing information on history in the form of updates, comments, and photographs.

Twitter is also an impacting level of communication which not only alerts people to events as they unfold, but also directs them to more in-depth sources of information. Though perhaps used more by institutions than by individuals, Twitter is becoming an important tool for teaching the North.

In order to teach the north and specifically to teach about the Canadian Arctic Expedition, we have had to make use of these new technologies. We can no longer depend on our stories being published in books and magazines, but must reach the younger audiences with Twitter and Facebook linking to significant websites.

Though websites are incredibly useful sources of information, there are difficulties associated. These include the discerning assessment of website content, the need for regular updating, and the problem of directing people to the website.

The most successful teaching programs will be those that include more traditional teaching and on-the-land experiences, along with the new technologies.

Some examples of programs making these combinations are:

Nunavut Tungavik Inc. which is putting their Nunavut oral history database online.

The Hay River Transport company is using on-site tours of actual boats along with classroom teaching and website information to train new employees.

Parks Canada sponsors on the land programs with Elders and youth sharing experiences in National Parks, as well as online Park experiences.

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Also visit David's CAE Blog on the same website: www.civilization.ca/arctic/blog.

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