

## KNOW YOUR OWN STORY FIRST

>> Now we all have our quest to knowledge and wisdom in some way. It takes us in different ways. Some of us, you know, you got to get older than 60 years old and you start to look back and you start to figure out where that knowledge and wisdom comes from. But all of us have our engagement with land, place, kin and indigeneity. At different times in our lives, I think when our hearts and our spirits and our minds are receptive or are ready for them. And I'm not sure how it happened, but I was finishing up my PhD at Simon Fraser, where Dennis worked for years, and I had taught like many of you, I had taught indigenous kids in Armstrong, British Columbia, next to the Enderby Reserve. And I knew nothing, OK? Yes, I was a brown boy. I was a Chinese kid working in a white Okanagan valley at the time. And yes, I was nice to those kids, but I knew very little about indigenous culture. I knew very little. And if I could go back and do it over again, there is so much that I would do differently in terms of learning and knowing and engaging with elders and engaging with wisdom. Mother was actually from the Sandwich Islands. She actually was a native of Punaluu, the village on the north shore of Oahu. And they were Chinese migrants who arrived at Oahu in 1893. Now I tell you this not out of ego, but partly because if you're going to speak and deal with indigenous issues, and I'm not indigenous to this place. My colleague, [inaudible] Martin Nakata told me, I said "God Martin, how do I teach Aborigine? I don't know anything. I'm from Canada. I know nothing." He said "Luke, just tell them who your people are, where your land is, who your kin are." So after learning, my entire academic career, I'm nominally a literacy guy. After learning from David Olson and others at Oise [phonetic] that the whole western education system is following a Piagetian model that takes children from narrative to exposition. We take children as if they are little oral culture children at age three to five, and we developmentally introduce them into the genre, and the linguistic technicalities of the expository essay. We teach them stories for five years and then we teach them to use the first person, and then developmentally we introduce them systematically, the second point in which equity becomes an issue is when kids hit disciplinary knowledge in secondary schools, at which point they have to shift from the first person to the third person. So, in fact, the ontology of western education is actually a move from oriculture to the textuality that is embedded in the Greek alphabet from the fourth century B.C. Well what happens is here's me, with many PhD's now, etc.; having to learn late in life from my indigenous colleagues how to speak in the first person again. How to tell the story of my kin and my parents again. So that's one of the first things that I want you to take away. And Andy said "If you wish to engage with other cultures and with other people, you must know your own story. You must be able to story yourself back into existence." After being turned into a third person APA reference and being slapped across the wrist every time you used I in your university essay. OK? So do you understand that juxtaposition? Is our entire western educational system moves from narrative to exposition. From story to essay. We beat the story out of people. We punish them for it quite literally. And then what happens is to re-engage with ourselves, with our spirit, with our land, and to re-engage with indigenous peoples and with other cultures, we must find seven generations back again. We must find our hearts and our spirits and our kin and our land once again. And we must find those stories again.

## INDIGENOUS VIEWS ON REFORM

>> The parents told us, for every parent, that test scores was not the most important thing for them. Think about the debate in this country right now about indigenous women. And the status of indigenous women and missing indigenous women. The parents were concerned about health. About knowledge of kin. About knowledge of culture. About knowledge of language. About substance abuse. About self-esteem. About depression. Okay. The parents were concerned with a whole gamut of issues around well-being. And last night I spoke to some people from Northern Ontario who said, would you please tell the Ministry that we need some things that show that we're making advances on those things even when our test scores don't move much. So let's not pillory these schools solely on the basis of their value added test score results. Because they need, they've got these other responsibilities that need to be played out.

## THE MAIN GAME KEY PATHS TO REFORM

>> School climate, well notice point two here, we were able to get change in staffing. Principals can make a difference by bringing more indigenous people into the staff, at all levels, grounds keepers, teachers, principals and so forth. And we did see movement over the reform period over a three to four year longitudinal period in math. And we also found that schools could very quickly make the symbolic change as needed. That is they could begin to spend time with indigenous protocols. They could bring art work in. They could fly the indigenous flags. Those things can be done but they are very, very simple first steps and very quickly can turn into tokenism unless you change the main game. We also found, empirically, that there were three past reform. That schools tended to follow one of these three pathways, and notice I say one of the three. We did what's called a path analysis, statistically. Some were really focussing on what we'd call the teaching and learning, high expectations, okay, they were focussing on the pedagogy. They did in service on the pedagogy with indigenous kids. Some were following pathway two which is they had elders in, they were following governance models. They were doing representative social justice. And some were bringing indigenous knowledge in. Guess what? Very few were doing all three. And in fact, I mean I know I'm pressed for time, the only handful of schools that we saw that actually were closing the gap on the test scores and in the attendance were doing all three. Okay, this reform requires all three. You can't just fix this through the pedagogy. You can't just fix this through the governance. And you can't just fix this through bringing indigenous knowledge in the curriculum. You've got to do all three.

## THE DEFICIT MODEL IS STILL ALIVE

>> We spoke to many Indigenous people, teacher aides, elders, etc. And again, Indigenous communities are heterogeneous, they are complex. So we actually would send multi-generational, multi-gendered teens into communities, because this assumption that one Indigenous person is the same as the other is like what a lot of

people think about white people. They all look alike, you know? I mean its nonsense. So we have heterogeneous Indigenous communities, and we had to send multi-generational. We had women to talk to women in certain generations and so forth. And what we had was a consistent report that the deficit model is alive and well. And the deficit model doesn't just extend to kids, Indigenous teachers and principals feel it as well. They are often spoken down to. They are often treated as experts only on Indigenous matters, not as proper professionals and so forth. OK? And the teachers, similarly, purported to have deficit views. When we asked teachers "What would you advise a new teacher coming to your school?" Here's what they said. Then one of our Indigenous researchers, Jane Phillips so classified them using Nvivo. And what she found was that 45% of the teachers given an open ended response said that the problem was in the kids of the community. Got it? So what we have here is a triangulation. The community is saying they think of us as deficit. And the teachers when we say "How do you move forward," are saying "It's the community and the kids that are a problem." OK? Notice on the third category, fourth category here, it's less than 10% of the teachers said the problem was pedagogy in curriculum. Isn't that interesting? OK? So what we have, this is Rachel Sharp and Anthony Green, Education and Social Control, 1978, which is teachers, that beginning teachers according to Sharp and Green in working class British schools. The beginning teachers, what they began to do was when a lesson failed in their first year of schooling, they'd blame themselves. By the third year of their teaching, guess what happens? When a lesson fails they blame the kids. And there was one teacher teaching with me in the Okanagan, and every year he'd come back and he was the senior science teacher and he'd say "They're dumber this year." And the scores were going down and down. This kind of deficit thinking tends to abrogate responsibility for Pedagogian curriculum and place it on the kids. So we have two communities, teachers talking deficit, community experiencing deficit and so forth. OK? And, of course, the kids experienced everyday experiences of being mislabeled and so forth, of what you would call misrecognition of their actions. Where this was taken as misbehaviour and that was taken as misbehaviour. One kid that we have, this girl here, was talking about how she was trying to help younger kids and she was accused of cheating. Because she was part of an extended family and was trying to help her kin as an auntie to younger children, she was accused of cheating and doing their homework. So there's a lot of misrecognition of what were for the kids culturally important practices.

## REFLECTION ON THE ONTARIO CONTEXT

>> There are two reasons that I'm here. First of all, it's Canada. It's Ontario. And this is, and I said this at quest in 2009, and it still is the case. You have endured political, industrial upheavals. You have endured a mayor. You've endured a tremendous wave of change. When I was Deputy Minister in Queensland, I remember at the end of a reform period I was told by my minister and by some of the senior politicians, look, mate, you've had five years of reform. That's better than anybody gets. And the degree to which this province -- through budget deficits, through different ministers, et cetera -- has stayed the course. And the degree to which all of you in York region, through different directors, through different administrations, through different boards. The

degree to which this system, this province and this country have remained committed to social justice and equity. And to making a difference in those areas throughout, as, you know, as we've lived through no child left behind. Rest in peace. And all of those other reforms. As we've lived through a Blair era and a third way and a fourth way and a fifth way or whatever it may be. You still have degrees of autonomy here to teach. You still have degrees of reasonably parsimonious assessment regimes and so forth. You still have freedom as teachers and professionalism, and high levels of professionalism. You still have events such as this of systems that are committed to teaching professionalism and teacher quality and to kids. So that's one reason I'm here, is because you're a system that stands as one of the beacons for public education still. Don't forget it. Don't take it for granted. Never do.

## NO MAGIC BULLETS

>> And in the time that I've been there, in Australia, over a 25 year-- I call these magic bullets. Everybody's waiting for the one instructional technique that will magically solve this. Left to the left wing is God Frera [phonetic], the gospel according to Frera. Others have the gospel according to phonics. There's the gospel according to culturally appropriate pedagogy. And what I'm going to argue and show is that this-- these things are part of the picture, but don't expect or wait or expect that some consultant or some package or that jolly phonics or the critical dialogue is going to basically solve all of your problems in Indigenous education or any other kind of system. As I've said on some of the tapes, what we see is that expert teaching actually is this repertoire of weaving, and uses multiple different pedagogical strategies. It doesn't find the magic bullet. We talked about we've done work on the linkages between improved attendance and achievement. I'll just briefly mention that. Jim Ladwig and I have just published a paper that shows that there is no empirical relationship at the school level between improved attendance and achievement. Sometimes your attendance goes up and your achievement actually goes down. It's a counterintuitive relationship. OK? It's a sociological question. A lot of times what applies to the individual kids is not applied to an institutional unit. So we know that a kid has to be there in order to do better, but on math sometimes we can get achievement up, but as Jim and I found looking at schools, if you get your attendance up, your achievement doesn't go up unless you do something about pedagogy. Hello. OK? We have a cultural strengths model, which talks about you finding out community strengths of knowledge and what kids bring to school, and engaging with that. Versus a very strong move, which we're involved in a huge political fight over now, that says phonics and the basics will solve this. Now I'll deal with that empirically later. But, you know, you guys know this. Every time somebody wants an answer there's kind of an edu -- what I called in some of my work an educational fundamentalism that pops up which says go back to the basics. I'll give you-- I'll show you that you can't go back to the basics if you're already there. OK? So one of the arguments, and quite literally there are entire remote communities now that are being run used DISTAR. OK? You know what DISTAR is. Which is direct instruction, micromanage, scripted pedagogy, Bereiter and Engelmann's model. OK? Now, the key issues that you're going to find, again, and often times what happens in indigenous education as in many. And later were going to deal with this when we talk about the

panel about the relationship between indigenous education and migrant education is that divide and rule steps in very, very quickly. We fight amongst ourselves over who's got the magic bullet, and very quickly the resources are fettered away and the discrimination continues.

## MOVING BEYOND POLITICALLY CORRECT

>> We are on Mississauga land, part of the Ojibwe Nation and I also want to acknowledge because you're from across the region and some of you I met last night are from Northern Ontario, all of the Williams Treaty First Nations Communities that we we're engaged with here. To any outsider, to anybody who landed on this planet from nowhere else, it would seem that we are in a very, very difficult time, that we are in a state historically, in which---in which both the geopolitical situation, but also questions of the varied sustainability of the species and planet are really on the table, and that in fact, it's not trickling down. It's part of our students and our everyday lives, which is people are worrying about sustainability. People are wearing forms of hurt. For many of us, it's reached a point I think where being cut off from our land, being cut off from our kin, being cut off generationally from what matters, being cut off from what the medicine wheel refers to as seven generations before and understanding that our actions have consequences from seven generations later, has brought us to a state where we know that western science has created as many problems as it's solved, and then in fact, we are looking for other answers. When I was working with Maori people on the Board of Napi in New Zealand at the University of Auckland and elsewhere, what we began to see is that engagement with indigenous culture was no longer a politically correct designer thing driven by white guilt or driven by a post-genocidal, post-colonial kind of guilt complex. But it actually, we were beginning to see traditional ways of healing, working where western medicine wasn't. We were beginning to see situations where environmental sustainability of the Muttonbird population on South Island in New Zealand was being engaged with and sustained through elders' knowledge and not through western bioscience any longer. So it may be, and any of you who have read Margaret Atwood's Trilogy on the Shores of Lake Ontario, and all the other dystopian visions about where the kind of planetary desecration is leading us as a species and as a people, all of you---I think many of us are beginning to see that there is wisdom in elders, and there is wisdom seven generations back that's been lost. And it may be that we're reaching a time in which this is not a politically correct thing that is just for "closing the gap," as I'll try to show you with some of my work today in Australia, but it's something that we all can benefit and learn from at a part in which land, spirit can in generation need to be re-instilled in our lives.

## KNOW YOUR OWN FISH TANK

>> But I want to talk about the work that I've been doing for the last five years before finishing. And I'll call it three roads to social justice. I say learning from Australian aboriginal education because, in a talk that I gave to AARE in 2010, I talked about generalizing across borders. A lot of educational research doesn't travel very well. It's

very, very contextual. It's very, very local. So the last thing that I would do is get off of a plane from Australia and tell you guys what to do. Okay. I love it. You know, American researchers are always saying, we must have the gold standard. We must find generalizable research. You can't extrapolate from X to Y. And suddenly James Herndon's research on early childhood effects from Chicago is being taken to Thailand. You know, models of principal, of the principalship were being implemented in Singapore. Hello, Han Chinese culture. Single party, autocratic patriarchal state. It doesn't work there that way, mate. Okay. So a lot of research just does not travel. So I'm not going to get off the plane and tell you, this is what we do, you do it too. We're going to do something that the ethnographers would call making the familiar strange. A lot of times it's better, it's easier to see what's going on in your own fish tank by looking at somebody else's, okay. A lot of times some of the hard truths about your own system are a little bit too tough to have somebody, it's a little bit too finger pointing. Professionals are proud. Teachers are proud. But a lot of times looking at another culture, another historical context, another environment may tease, pries apart some of the issues. So while I'm talking today, please kind of register, look at the parallels. Look at some of the differences.