

From Pedagogy to Practice Opening The Dialogue

[MUSIC]

TEXT ON SCREEN: Opening The Dialogue

REBECCA CLARKE: So if you see up here I have a graph and if you notice we have the pink lines here and the blue lines here. So we have Nunavut and Ontario. So what conclusions can you make from this graph? What is this graph just teaching you right now just that look on this graph? Frankie?

FRANKIE: It's telling you what type of food is more expensive in Ontario and in Nunavut?

REBECCA CLARKE: Okay, so we're looking here and we're seeing that the prices are more than double or double in Nunavut than they are in Ontario, and I have a question for you and I want you to think, why? Why do you believe that the prices in Nunavut for food are so much more expensive than they are in Ontario? Why do you believe that is?

REBECCA CLARKE: I really like teaching grade 6 because at grade 6 they sort of have that passion where they see the right and the wrong in the world and they get impassioned with it and I find they really become engaged when they hear about the issues and they are really sort of impassioned by the fact that how could this have happened? How could the residential schools have happened? How could that have happened with the treaties? And they become really, really engaged with the whole topic so that way I find the students, they really respond well to it.

STUDENT 1: So now we have to find the difference--

STUDENT 2: I'm doing it.

STUDENT 3: I'll do that too.

REBECCA CLARKE: We were doing a lesson the other day where we were looking at the water on First Nations reserve, how you're not able to drink the water on some of the reserves and I have a boy in the class who is First Nations and he was able to show us where his grandmother lives, and where her reserve is, and speak to us about how far his grandmother has to drive for the water. And the other students are really interested and they could not believe that this was happening in Canada. So I think for both of them it's good for them both to have that perspective.

TONY TOURVILLE: To understand where you're at you have to understand where your parents came from. And your grandparents. And probably your great grandparents came from to truly understand yourself.

NARRATOR: And that's true for Canadians from all walks of life. In order for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit education to move forward there's consensus that students, educators, administrators, parents, and community members all must have some context into what has happened in the past.

TONY TOURVILLE: When I was at that school we had 100 boys, 100 girls. I had three sisters in that school. For the eight years I was there I don't think I talked to my sisters once.

DOROTHY WYNNE: To this day I don't have that contact closeness with my sister like my daughters have, and I envy them. It was difficult.

TONY TOURVILLE: There was a fence. They were across the fence and we weren't allowed to go near that fence, within 10 feet of that fence or you'd get a severe beating. So in the eight years I was there and my sisters were there I never talked to them. So when I left they were strangers to me after eight years. So that was the brutality of that system. And it's gonna take us a long time for the Native people to get back to where they were pre-residential school days.

DOROTHY WYNNE: You're so fortunate. So when we got kicked out of residential school, went to a public school it was so different. Just like day and night how we were treated. This is your school, be proud of it being here. You're here to learn. Teachers are here to help you.

GIIDAAKUNADAAD (NANCY ROWE): We don't want to tell the truth so that we can hurt people, but we can't come up with the proper solutions if we don't be able to sit and listen to the truth.

TONY TOURVILLE: I see things happening now which gives me great confidence in that I think we have better schools, teachers. I sees Natives becoming doctors, lawyers. All the questions that all goes back, most of them go back right back to education. That you got to educate yourself.

GIIDAAKUNADAAD (NANCY ROWE): It we learn about the real issues, all these things over here, so many issues with Indigenous people today. If we learn about that then maybe we can come up with some kind of solutions and how we're gonna change that. So when we're going into the classes, or the classes are coming here, or the teachers are coming here we're effecting a lot of people and students who are actually gonna be learning the real history of this country.

DOROTHY WYNNE: So I tell you to listen to your teachers and do your work what you're asked to do because it's for your benefit. Not only you now, but when you're older, you're married, your children and your grandchildren.

NARRATOR: When students express interest in Canadian history doors open to teaching them about the contemporary issues that surround First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities.

JENNIFER OUSSOREN: It's just really important for equality and for justice in the province for our students coming up to understand the history, and understand the reasons for some of the issues that they're seeing today and to come away with more understanding and compassion, and commitment for change.

CHELSEA: Yes it's uncomfortable but we're still learning a lot about it and it will stick with us 'cause it's just I'm like oh this sort of happened and you skip over it then we're not really gonna have it set in with us and stay with us because whatever I'm learning right now I'm gonna know in like 10, 20 years.

Not a lot of people know what exactly happened. I'll go home and talk with my parents and they'll be like oh, I never knew that 'cause they didn't get this education when they were younger. So I find teachers teaching it now will help students like me go talk to it, and it just spreads from there.

TODD SAUNDERS: For me that's a big part of the whole reconciliation process, and closing those gaps, and building those bridges that we need to between the communities. For our students it's part of their everyday life, and for all Canadians I think that it should be part of our collective history and our collective future so that if we can have these students learning about the cultures of all Canadians I think it's gonna make a big difference for everybody,.

ARDEN: Once it kind of I know about it and my brother knows about it then if we have kids our kids will know about it and it can just get passed on. And then people will realize that everyone's important.

TALLAWAH: A lot of people don't know about the culture and a lot of people when they think about the culture they think about the stereotypical version of our culture. I think that it's very important that people understand this and learn this. I feel like a lot of people are missing out.

KIARA: It is an interesting thing to learn about. Even I love learning about it even though I learned about it my whole life. It's still give me more, you know? I want more. Not my grandparents, my great grandparents went to residential schools and I'd just like to know the things that happened to them there.

ANNA: My granny and grandpa went to residential school and yeah, I'm just very curious of what happened.

JONATHAN: That was 2002 when I moved to Uganda as a refugee. I have all these opportunities to think about my future and I believe it's not fair if I'm treated this way. I'm a stranger to this land and the original people of this land are being treated differently. I don't think that's fair at all. If everybody is educated and I'm sure a lot of kids in my class are willing to if they had the possibility to make change they would right now.

ARDEN: If someone doesn't know about it they can't do anything about it, but now that I do know about it I can do something about it.

TIM: We need to educate other people and I'm sure that Ontario and Canada will educate people as we go because now is just the start of telling people. So I'm sure the knowledge will be deeper and I'm sure people will learn more and more. But we need to tell people, like older people like parents and grandparents what we've learned because they still don't have a clue.

JESSA: And it was cool to go home and tell my parents about these things and change their mindsets and change my family's mindsets of how they picture things.

EMILY: It's a part that needs to be heard because it's a part that we struggled with for a while so if we learn about it, it won't repeat itself again in our future.

PETER SCHULER: The only way to fix it is if every Canadian citizen stands up and does something to fix it. And you can't have reconciliation if everybody's sitting on their hands. People have to stand up no matter how uncomfortable it is and look at the truth, and try and do something to fix what was done before.

DEVON: With younger minds and that, they really are gonna influence what's gonna happen in the future. After generations pass by they're gonna be influencing their children and go on and on that way. So if you can really get education and teach them these things, really get them to learn the message, and see what's going on and learn all the things that has happened and what we can do to change, and the positive things that we can make an impact on they can then change what's gonna happen with the future entirely because that's what they are. They are the future.

REBECCA CLARKE: So when you get these messages to people like that you are literally changing the world which is a cool thing to be looking at, how you can be swaying the society and the way we view things, and entirely revolutionising the world. So I think education's one of the most important things we could do right now for issues like this.

TAMMY HARDWICK: One of the boys in class sort of thought it up how it's important that we learn about it so that this doesn't happen again, and that how we're the generation that's going to make sure that this doesn't happen again and that we have that perspective and we're hearing the voice of the when the country's making its decisions and stuff, and that we have to see where it's coming from. So just sort of to give them the hope that it's getting better.

When you think about the seven teachings think about humility, and if you acknowledge that fact that teachers don't know everything. We don't know everything in many subject areas but to be able to move forward, and to learn, and to still engage in that curriculum that's a positive step and it takes time to grow and to be able to embed the curriculum in a good way. So making sure that we're looking at that historical context but also bringing in that contemporary context so that that's bridged together and not always looking in the historical perspective.

COOK: Hey, RJ, those are probably done now. Maybe one more minute yeah. Let's see.

NARRATOR: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit education uses a hands on approach in engaging new and compelling ways for students to learn and then bring those teachings to their communities.

DOROTHY WYNNE: Bring your hand right around your bowl there to get all the flour that's stuck on the side there. There.

PETER JOLIFFE: Students can learn in the abstract. They can learn with their hands and I feel like it's very powerful for them to be out and fishing as opposed to learning about fishing. It's powerful to connect with others and talk as opposed to reading about it. So in the abstract is great, that's part of it. It's also extended into this experiential place and that includes travel, that includes these trips. It includes having other community members into the school. It includes the hallways, it includes lunch hours, our intramurals, our sports. It includes it all.

DARREN LENTZ: Okay, you can bring that over here and just sort of heat this side up. Yeah, about that-

RYAN ROY: With the canoe building we've done, we've gone out to Old Fort William and we learned basically how they build the canoes and how they harvested the materials as we did today. So taking that back into the classroom more than likely we will have it in our literacy situation where we'll talk about some of the traditional learnings and teachings that we can reflect on based on what we've learned so far. It's really endless as what you can do but it'll be connected more to the kids I think because they actually did too. So when you're reflecting afterwards and you're asking them to maybe write about things it's a lot easier to get more writing out of them, and better writing out of them when they actually have done something like we did today that was hands on.

RAY LAKE: We've been working on kind of Aboriginal/Canadian relations and we've been talking about residential schools for about two weeks now. We read the novel Indian Horse. My hope is by this point the kids are ready to move beyond just feeling shock, and guilt, and fear and to move into that point of what does healing look like? So how do we move past this truth portion which you have to get through to find some way to make it meaningful in your life and make it positive?

STUDENT: Nice.

RAY LAKE: Grab one that actually fits you. That's some life advice right there. On the one side of this rock we're gonna have truth, on the other we're gonna have reconciliation? It's a big, long word for a little rock but we're gonna paint small.

NICOLE RICHMOND: Really being compassionate or empathetic that there are different ways of learning or that there are different and equally as important world views, pedagogies, all these big words that we like to talk about in education. So

maybe what we need to be evaluating is how we're delivering our education model and how we can evaluate some of the norms about what we think should be taught and how we can sort of incorporate our curriculum into an Indigenous way of learning.

So what are the lessons from the land? How can we learn about ecosystems by being on the land and really having an experience of being a person of the Earth and that's who we are, and that's where we come from? So how do we bring our curriculum to what's already out there?

JENNIFER KNIGHT-BLACKNED: If you can teach a concept let's say in math you can pull out the textbook and you can teach that concept in math, but you can also go out on the land and teach the similar concept. Why not go more towards the practical and the culturally specific experiences instead of always just the textbooks? We can watch videos about things, but if we made a video about it could the children learn more? More about themselves and then more about the concepts.

REBECCA CLARKE: So what did they hunt? Oh excellent, I guess you kind of know.

TEACHER: She was a bit of the expert here yeah.

REBECCA CLARKE: It's good we have experts.

As student success teacher not only do we work with students in the classroom but we also work with them outside of the classroom. My primary focus is on wellbeing, insuring the students are well because I find that students perform better not only in school but in life if their foundation is firm. I think sometimes we tend to focus only on data, only on what students do in the classroom and I think at schools as a school community we need to really look at a student as a whole and look at all aspects of their life.

CARMAN TOZER: We run a breakfast program here to meet their physical needs. We run our academics and our curriculum here to meet their intellectual needs. We have a variety of programs here to meet their physical needs and we try to embed and bring our elders in and take our students out on the land to meet some of their spiritual needs. So we try to look at all aspects of the students and in doing so we feel that our students can move forward in life.

STUDENT: Said a few words. [INAUDIBLE]

LUISA BOTELHO: I see students having a conversation and coming with a resolution in a way that I hadn't seen before.

DARREN LENTZ: I noticed a change in all the students and their openness and understanding of a variety of different cultures or differences just in students themselves and their acceptance, and their willingness to learn about others and not judging.

SHARLA FALODI: So that's your intro.

STUDENT: Now we'll do the spirit horse.

SHARLA FALODI: Wonderful. What it's done is it's allowed me to get to know them in a more intimate way, like just understanding them as a whole child and not just academically. I'm able to see them just jump straight onto a horse and know they're at one of the most vulnerable positions and seeing how they respond to that and how they overcome their fears and that they have to communicate with me.

And then forever that for the rest of the year we have a bond that we wouldn't typically have had elsewhere. so I think that it's so crucial that they're learning about their culture because they're able to relate to it and then have a common place to speak to me about it and where they are and that this is their curriculum and they're mostly teaching me. Yeah.

TODD SAUNDERS: I think anytime you can have something that's real. Real life, real world it's going to be deeper for all the students but I also think it creates some bridges between our students, so the students whose cultures are represented feel more part of our school community and it increases the interest level of their classmates, they start to ask questions and you see those friendships building across cultures. So I think that's a really important part as well.

CHRISTINE VANDERWAL: Next year I'd really like to always be bringing in that Indigenous perspective across any subject area. Even the science curriculum there's lots of pieces that can be brought in there and I don't believe that it should be taught in isolation. I don't believe that, I think that it should be integrated throughout the entire curriculum. Through science, through health, geography, of course history there should always be the Indigenous perspective. We should always be thinking about that as treaty partners.

CARMAN TOZER: Aboriginal people are the fastest growing population in Canada. We're the youngest population in Canada. I think more and more people are coming out and self-identifying as being Indigenous and I think we really need to equip the rest of society that hey, we're here and we're here to stay, and we're gonna be taking a more important role in what's happening in Canada. And so I think yeah I think the rest of Canada needs to be prepared for us.

TONY TOURVILLE: Stay in school, get yourself a real good education. Be something. Stay in school, work hard, and that's the best thing you can do. Yeah.

[MUSIC]

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www.edugains.ca/newsite/curriculum/elementaryresources/socialstudies.html