

FOREWORD

If we talk in Mi'kmaq, they [the children] are more motivated to learn. I find it helps the kids to open up; it takes down this barrier and gives the class a sense of community and family. (Nicole in Orr, p. 341)

We learn to honour our individual gifts, we learn to respect the knowledge of our ancestors, we learn to honour all of Creation. When we know our beginnings, we can begin to learn where we are going. (Anderson, p. 296)

These two statements by First Nations educators in Canada illustrate the many affirmations of the value of indigenous languages and cultures presented in this collection. First Nations teachers, scholars and community leaders come together with non-Indigenous colleagues to explore important issues in a remarkable series of cross-cultural collaborative relationships. Other parts of the collection are written in a single voice, but in every case it is a voice enriched and shaped by the knowledge and desire for educational renewal that come from a vibrant community.

The editors themselves also maintain the balance, communicating and working together across what might have been a barrier but becomes, instead, a bridge. What Kanonhsionni / Janice C. Hill and Arlene Holland Stairs have achieved here is a dialogue of a special kind. It allows readers to gain a new understanding of issues that are both rich in local complexities and uniqueness – Mohawk language classes in Ontario, or Elders' teaching in the Qu'Appelle valley of Saskatchewan – and broadly significant in concerns and triumphs that reach across indigenous cultures. Moreover, these issues, and the insights and solutions that are being developed in relation to them, can enrich us all.

The authors and editors who speak in this collection recognize that many challenges are still to be faced but they share a belief that change for the better is already well underway. Many of their insights are of great value in the larger North American and global contexts, wherever children and adults of Indigenous/non-Indigenous backgrounds meet in a common effort to learn, to communicate, and to lead successful lives. The *McGill Journal of Education* is proud to support this process.

A.B.