Messages from Graduates of the Seven Generations Education Institute-Aboriginal Teacher Education Program

Presented at the Circle of Light

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- Our ancestors who were first faced with colonization and stood strong as Nations
- Maawidobines, headman, Treaty #3, 1870’s ensuring education is a treaty right
- MTCU-AEO for funding
- Researchers and authors David Anderson, Jackie Moore, Sherri Oshawee and Laura Horton
- Authors of Indian Control of Indian Education
- Designers of NTEP/ATEP
- Partner institutions and universities who accepted the challenge to respond to ICIE
- ATEP administrators, instructors
- All NTEP/ATEP students and graduates, past and present
Reflections on readiness for the classroom and acceptance...

- “Now that I have been teaching for several years, I realize studying to be a teacher is very different from being a teacher.
- ‘I would like more on report cards”
- I felt confident in applying both mainstream methods and Aboriginal ways of learning and methodologies.”
- “Younger teachers are intrigued and they want to know more about what/how the program was different. Older teachers view it less than theirs. But that’s okay. It doesn’t bother me. I know that what I have gotten from the program is valuable.”
Seven Generations Education Institute has

- Been training teachers since 1991 part time
- partnered with Lakehead University 1991-99 (NTEP)
- current partnership with Queen’s University 1999- present (ATEP)
- partnered to graduate over 100 teachers

This research focuses on 73 graduates, receiving 79 diplomas and degrees in education from the ATE program through Queen’s
Purpose of this Review

• To reconnect with graduates and listen as they speak of the success and shortfalls of ATEP
• To explore employment paths of ATEP graduates
• To analyze hiring practices of various boards
• To record and share messages SGEI-ATEP graduates have for ATEP Administration; School Partners; ATEP Teacher Candidates; Ontario College of Teachers
SGEI-ATEP – Who are the Students?

Our program is designed for Aboriginal students to teach K-6 in any Ontario school. When seats are available, SGEI accepts Non-Aboriginal people who have a Bachelor degree and are recommended by an Aboriginal educator.

ATEP teaches the Ontario curriculum and Aboriginal pedagogy. (SGEI-ATEP is not a Native Second Language training program.)
SMALL CLASS SIZES help us connect and stay connected. Each year, approximately 15-20 students apply. It is common that 15-18 offers will be granted. When class begins, there are usually 12 ready to go. This report focuses on those that complete the program.
We Found Graduates

- teaching in First Nation, catholic and public schools,
- instructing at the college and university level
- continuing their education
- working in non-related fields

- and we remembered those who have passed through the Western Doorway

SGEI Alumni ATEP Graduates
Employment Activities * as of April 8, 2011

- 52% Teaching
- 22% Not Teaching
- 12% Employed in Education Related Field
- 11% Unknown Activity
- 3% Deceased

73 Graduates (2001-10)
Teacher Candidates learning – elementary students learning from Graduates
47% of graduates are not teaching! We learned many are in positions of responsibility in their communities. Education has provided graduates with tangible skills, knowledge and values to secure meaningful careers in a variety of fields.
For those that are teaching, where are they?

SGEI Alumni Teaching Graduates by Teaching Breakdown

- 42% Teaching in a Post Secondary Institute - College
- 19% Teaching in a Catholic Elementary School
- 18% Teaching in a First Nation Elementary School
- 5% Teaching in a Public Elementary School
- 16% Teaching in a Secondary School

*As of April 8, 2011

What are the teaching assignments?

Great start, what are the messages?
Messages from the Graduates:
To Administration (SGEI, Queen’s ATEP, EDU, OCT)

- more liaising with boards to inform them about ATEP and our equal virtues as teachers
- Promote more Aboriginal qualified teachers in school systems
- I really believe OCT should promote Aboriginal teachers, success of Aboriginal teachers... poster forums... we must see well seasoned and experienced Aboriginal teachers
Messages from the Graduates:  
To School Partners (First Nation and Provincial)

- My school board has a long way to go to recruit Aboriginal teachers (75% Aboriginal pop) I am rare in board with over 200 teachers. I don’t want to be token
- Provide Aboriginal awareness to staff, there are assumptions about parents that don’t care, we know better
- Recruit more Aboriginal teachers... dedicated positions... children need Aboriginal role models
- We have to reach out to the community, parents... they have trust in us, students too, immediate connection...
Messages from the Graduates: To SGEI-ATEP Teacher Candidates

- The work is hard and it is achievable...
- Feel confident that when you complete, you are just as qualified as the rest of the teachers in your school. Don’t allow anyone to make you feel less.
- Finances are a big struggle... look for support, work together with your peers... we don’t get many chances to do this
- There is a beautiful tapestry in ATEP. It is created through inclusion and team approach... needs more male role models... build relationships with one another
Graduates told us, data shows us: Non Aboriginals are hired for regular classroom positions in provincial schools while Aboriginal grads are assigned Aboriginal focus classes. Why? How is this equitable? Aboriginal children need role models, worldview, connections.
Provincial schools hire BA-ATEP grads to teach regular classrooms and Dip-ATEP grads for focus classrooms.

First Nation schools hire Aboriginal graduates.

Dip. Ed grads must continue their BA

Boards may hire Dip Ed with a PLP to complete their BA within a time frame.
Education is lifelong. Graduates are seeking their BA and B.Ed. B.Ed grads are moving on to their M.Eds.
16 Recommendations to:
SGEI-ATEP – Queen’s including:

- increase awareness of ATEP credentials and quality of program (not a NSL program)
- re-establish focus on Special Education and IPRC process
- lengthen component on split grade classrooms
- Enrich sessions on report card writing, due dates, assessments
- increase use of IT
- review content of curriculum in respect to latest indigenous research – Indigenous pedagogy
10 Recommendations to First Nation and Provincial School Boards including:

- Recognize SGEI-ATEP graduates as leaders in the field of teaching Aboriginal learners... provide them with leadership roles towards the implementation of the Aboriginal Framework
- Activate and give voice to the AE Framework and Toolkit which appears to be inactive in some schools.
- Provide more exposure of Aboriginal culture beyond Native Awareness Week, need to see visibility of Aboriginal Worldview
- Provide more PD and mentorship
Next Steps

- Implement the recommendations immediately
- Present findings to NOEL, Boards of Education, OCT
- Present findings to Queen’s and discuss ways to strengthen the program using data from all the reviews
- Work with Queen’s to improve the application and acceptance process
- Increase Aboriginal perspectives, knowledge and worldviews into all course content
- Seek funding and support for the full scale review
4 Recommendations to the Ontario College of Teachers

- Promote the ATEP and highlight their skill sets and assets within any school system
- Create promotional materials with images of experienced and well-seasoned Aboriginal teachers including SGEI-ATEP graduates
- Acknowledge ATEP graduates possess equivalent of the AQ- Teacher of Native Children Part 1
- Provide that AQ upon graduation