



First Nations in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Educational Frontiers

John W. Friesen, Virginia Lyons Friesen

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In the twenty-first century, Aboriginal communities have made great strides in their development as they seek to take their rightful place in the fabric of Canadian society. They have forged ahead on a number of seemingly intractable fronts, including treaty negotiations, land claims, the terrible legacy of residential schools, economic development, and health and welfare. But much more work needs to be done if Aboriginal people are to achieve true equality with the rest of Canada.

The key to maintaining this momentum lies, of course, in education. While high school graduation rates and enrollment in post-secondary institutions have risen slowly among Aboriginal students, both lag far behind the rates for non-Aboriginals. Clearly, the status quo isn't working. John Friesen and Virginia Lyons Friesen offer innovative solutions to fix the educational system by tackling six key areas that impact Aboriginal students: spirituality, the role of Elders, language, self-identity, curriculum, and teacher training. In the end, the authors propose a system more adaptive to the unique aspects of Aboriginal culture, a system that will enhance the success of Aboriginal students and speed their communities along the road of development and equality.

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