

NATIVE EDUCATION: A LEARNING JOURNEY

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By Diana M. Steinhauer, © 1997

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the educational needs, concerns, and desires of a First Nations community in Alberta. It is reflective of the issues which were presented in the *Alberta Native People's View on Native Education* study completed in 1987 by Alberta Education. It has been determined that the educational needs and concerns found in this community are similar to those which are presented in the study. Additional characteristics and features unique to this First Nation have been identified.

The learning aspect of this thesis is ascribed to the literature on colonialism which has provided me with an opportunity to shift my paradigm about the circumstances and issues faced by this particular First Nations community. Thus, the meaning and understanding for why and how the First Nations operate and view themselves was clarified. The theory, practise, and attitudes prevalent in colonial mentality has created multiple layers of behaviours and patterns of distress for First Nations to address. It behoves First Nations people in this study and everywhere to begin to peel away these layers to discern and reclaim for themselves the power and legitimization of their own cultural norms, values, and beliefs. The learning journey of finding meaning and seeking understanding is for every First Nation member.