
TEACHING HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES THROUGH INDIGENOUS COMIC BOOKS



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To cite this article >

Dufour, E. (2019). *Teaching Historical and Contemporary Issues through Indigenous Comic Books*. *Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples*, 3, p. 14-17.

Although there has been a gradual improvement in the representation of Indigenous peoples in the Quebec curricula and textbooks since the 1970s, considerable parts of First Peoples history, and thus national history, are still too timidly studied in the province's schools today (Arsenault, 2012; Bories-Sawala, 2014; Dufour, 2014). Beyond integration of certain crucial pages of our national narrative into the different curricula, we must remember that the real contribution of this teaching depends not only on the programs themselves, but also on the didactic tools used, the ability of the teacher to transmit this difficult knowledge, and on the student's dispositions to integrate it (Brodeur-Girard in Dufour, 2015). Considering the first evolutionist and then ethnocentric character of Quebec educational programs and textbooks from yesterday to today (Vincent and Arcand, 1979; Trudel, 2000; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), it seems essential to me that Indigenous memories and stories be transmitted through the use of materials bearing empirical knowledge, capable of generating a true empathetic response conducive to the emergence of a critical reflection on our

relationship to the Other. This step is essential to the memory and recognition work, which includes the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the cultural security of Indigenous students.

The transmission of knowledge associated with colonial abuse, to name only territorial dispossession, the residential school system or violence against Indigenous women and girls, can be, in itself, a difficult experience for Native and non-Native youth. The transmission of "difficult knowledge" is defined by Pitt and Britzman (2003) as the process by which representations associated with traumatic, historical or sociocultural events are integrated within the pedagogical curriculum. While it is particularly important to perfect the training of teachers in the field of indigeness (Brodeur-Girard, 2015; Milne, 2017), it is also essential to provide teachers with epistemological and didactic tools enabling the judicious integration of difficult knowledge. It is thus a question of defusing potential feelings of anger or guilt, which can lead to withdrawal, by organizing activities of reflection, discussion

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(Also see *Innu Meshkenu : Tracer son chemin : Guide pédagogique pour exploiter la bande dessinée racontant l'histoire du Dr Stanley Vollant*: C. Couture, C. Duquette, and L. Lemieux (Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, 2014).

NOTES

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