Aboriginal Canada 1
Readings

• Wilson & Cardwell 2012 on urban aboriginal health
• Godlewska et al 2010 on the shortcomings of Ontario’s educational curriculum toward aboriginals
Wilson & Cardwell 2012

• Drew on major health surveys from 2000-2001 era
• Looked at the social determinants of health for urban aboriginals
Urban Aboriginals

• 1 million + aboriginal folk in Canada
  – First Nations, Inuit, Metis
• Increasingly an urban population
  – 1950s: <7% urban
  – Early 1960s: 13%
  – 2000s: 50%+
• Yet health issues for this urban population little explored
Toronto

• In 2006 census Toronto CMA had 26,575 aboriginal people
  – The biggest urban aboriginal population in Ontario
  – Just 0.5% of Toronto’s population
Survey Findings

• Urban aboriginals tend to have higher rates of illness (morbidity) and higher rates of death (mortality) than the general population

• Suffer less cancer, more diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease. Obesity

• Tends to be a younger population
Survey Findings

• Urban aboriginals have more ill-health than non aboriginals
  – But some differences fade when you compare similar income, educational levels
  – Major differences still remain
Godlewska et al 2010

- Surveys the Ontario school curriculum and finds that it is doing a poor job at educating people on native studies
- Accuses Ontario’s school system of perpetuating ignorance
### Table 1
Aboriginal content: Ontario social studies, history and geography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 1—relationships, rules and responsibilities</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Canada and world connections: grade 1—the local community</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 2—traditions and celebrations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Canada and world connections: grade 2—features of communities around the world</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 3—early settlements in upper Canada</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Canada and World connections: grade 3—urban and rural communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 4—medieval times</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Canada and world connections: grade 4—Canada’s provinces, territories, and regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 5—early civilizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Canada and World connections: grade 5—aspects of citizenship and government in Canada</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 6—first nation peoples and European explorers</td>
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<td>Canada and World connections: grade 6—Canada’s links to the world</td>
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<td>History</td>
<td>New France</td>
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<td>History: Grade 7—British North America</td>
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<td>Conflict and change</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
<td>The themes of geographic inquiry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Patterns in physical geography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural resources</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Confederation</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>The development of Western Canada</td>
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<td>Canada: a changing society</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Geography</td>
<td>Patterns in human geography</td>
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<td>Economic systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total average Aboriginal Coverage in all elementary courses: 2.7

**SOURCE:** Calculated from Ontario Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/subjects.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/subjects.html)
Godlewska et al 2010

- Ontario’s main curriculum effort on native studies is mostly confined to grade 6

![Graph showing Aboriginal content by grade. The graph indicates that there is a significant focus on Aboriginal content in grade 6, with minimal content in other grades.]
Godlewska et al 2010

- Native studies get an airing in the secondary curriculum, but the many options make it less universal

*Figure 2*
Total Social Studies and Canadian and World Studies courses offered in the relevant years. Derived from Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents.
Godlewska et al 2010

- Complains that the curriculum tends to be racist, colonial. Treats the settler society as normal
Godlewska et al 2010

- Ontario and a few other provinces have created a Native Studies curriculum at secondary level
- Programme reaches few schools, students
- 5 million kids through Ontario High Schools 1999-2005
  - Only 5500 in Native Studies
Figure 6
Schools in southern Ontario with 0–19 Native Studies courses offered, 1999–2005.
Figure 7
Schools in northern Ontario with 0–23 Native Studies courses offered, 1999–2005.
Native Studies

• Tends to be available in schools likely to have significant aboriginal enrollment
• Not truly mainstream
Godlewska et al 2010

- Ontario Ministry of Education tends to put geography & native studies in separate silos:
  - Geography as environmental science
  - Native studies as cultural studies
- Aboriginal people not important to geography as taught in Ontario K-12 schooling
Within the schools

- Schools on reserve stocked without culturally-appropriate teaching materials
  - Math books which refer to sidewalks
  - Literacy materials geared to the multicultural city