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

• But recent research shows real population is 3x larger than census suggests
  – And seriously affected by poverty
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.
Wilson & Cardwell

• 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>Heritage and citizenship: grade 1—relationships, rules and responsibilities</td>
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<td>Canada and world connections: grade 1—the local community</td>
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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
Ontario’s main curriculum effort on native studies is mostly confined to grade 6

Figure 1
Aboriginal content by grade. This figure provides percent mandated Aboriginal content by grade from grades 1 to 12. Grades in which there is no attention to Aboriginal content are blank. Derived from Ontario Ministry of Education curricular documents.
Native studies get an airing in the secondary curriculum, but the many options make it less universal.
Godlewska et al 2010

• Complains that the curriculum tends to be racist, colonial. Treats the settler society as normal
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