

M'Lot, C., & Ferguson, K. A. (Eds.). (2022). Resurgence: Engaging with Indigenous narratives and cultural expressions in and beyond the classroom

Laura Forsythe

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**M'Lot, C., & Ferguson, K. A. (Eds.). (2022).
*Resurgence: Engaging with Indigenous narratives and cultural
expressions in and beyond the classroom.*
Portage & Main Press. ISBN: 9781774920008**

Reviewed by: Laura Forsythe, University of Winnipeg

As educators, it is our privilege and responsibility to integrate Indigenous content and learning processes into our classrooms. (M'lot & Ferguson, 2022, p. 2)

For years in Indigenous education, we have spent time, effort, and energy teaching non-Indigenous teachers to be Indigenous. However, teaching only our cosmologies, spiritualities, and histories is insufficient to prepare teachers for the real world. Educators need pragmatic approaches to implement and move from the abstract to the concrete regarding teacher tools. To actualize the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015), we need educators who are empowered to actualize mandated curriculum, able to effortlessly bring in tools to assist, and connected enough to bring in the experts.

Editors M'lot and Ferguson (2022) have created a journey for educators that allows each, regardless of their previous knowledge of Indigenous content, to implement Indigenous education into their classroom successfully. *Resurgence* is a tool free of fear of making a mistake, often cited as one of the reasons educators shy away from integrating Indigenous knowledge, culture, and histories into their classrooms (Dion, 2007; Restoule & Nardozi, 2019). *Resurgence* moves toward a model that accepts that teachers need pragmatic tools to move forward.

M'lot and Ferguson (2022) aim to support the Calls to Action (TRC, 2015), framing the collection to assist in actualizing Calls 62 (i) and 63 (i, ii, iii, iv) (TRC, 2015, p. 7). Call 62 asks educators, along with governments, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous contemporary contributions to Canada. Call 63 is a call to develop and implement kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum and Indigenous resources and to share content and best practices on teaching Indigenous history while building students' understanding of the experience of others (TRC, 2015). In doing so, the editors have supported individual educators to support the Calls to Action in their classrooms. Senator and former TRC Commissioner Murray Sinclair has repeatedly said, "Education is the key to reconciliation" (Watters, 2015, para. 17). The editors have taken up this message and are committed to helping educators realize their potential to actualize in the classrooms through the lessons provided in the collection.

"Part One: Resistance" addresses how Indigenous peoples have fought against attempts at erasure and assimilation. This section highlights the work of four Indigenous women using narratives and poems to teach about Indigenous peoples' lived realities, emphasizing resistance through resilience. The teachings of Haida scholar Sara Florence Davidson on the creation of her father's totem pole "Beyond

Being Silenced” speaks to intergenerational learning. This piece is followed by award-winning Métis poet Rita Bouvier’s essay and poem “one morning after the rain.” Dedicated to her grandmother, the poem introduces the class to land-based teachings and Indigenous ways of knowing. Continuing with the use of poetry, language revivalist and Kwakwaka’wakw poet Lucy Hemphill uses a poem called “T’seka,” which is about a potlatch ceremony, to teach matriarchy and family connection, among many other things. The section ends with two poems by Cree poet Louise Bernice Halfe, the first Indigenous poet laureate of Saskatchewan: “Holy Eucharist” and “miyo kisikaw.” These poems are centered on residential school, decolonization, and reconciliation, prompting students to consider the harm caused to Indigenous students while exploring what successful Indigenization could be in their school. Readers are reminded to acknowledge the diversity featured in the section and to show reverence in the powerful words shared.

“Part Two: Resilience” highlights Indigenous peoples’ ongoing strength, power, and healing. This section addresses holistic well-being, attempting to speak to the often overlooked topics of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health needed to be resilient. David A. Roberston, the author of 25 books for young readers, tells his story of reading and writing through mental health struggles with a focus on feelings and resilience. In “Writing as a Therapeutic Medium,” Cree contributor Wanda John-Kehewin presents the concepts of identity, escapism, and processing trauma for learners. Award-winning Cree and Ojibway artist KC Adams’s birchbark work explores symbolism and decoding while emphasizing the act of art creation. Ending the section is Dene author Lisa Boivin, who shares powerful artwork depicting body sovereignty, consent, and systemic racism and asks readers to take responsibility for their learning. The editors ask readers to consider the principle of reciprocity in prompting educators to think of ways learners can share what they are learning with their communities.

“Part 3: Restoring” shows efforts to challenge harmful narratives while restoring Indigenous ways of knowing, thinking, and being. The threads of Indigenous Storywork by Stó:lō scholar Jo-ann Archibald are evident throughout the collection but find special prominence in this section as readers are reminded to maintain reverence for the stories shared. As an act of remembrance, Nakota educator Charlene Bearhead and Elder Wilson Bearhead team up to bring the importance of storytelling and oral histories to the classroom. In this section of questioning mainstream societal norms, Swampy Cree filmmaker and writer Sonya Ballantyne speaks to Indigenous representation in literature and media and the importance of role models. The last two contributors to this section bring surprising disciplines into classroom design and gaming for Grades 11–12. Ininew architect Reanna Merasty shares images and stories of the development of spaces using traditional and modern Indigenous architecture to frame indigenization, land acknowledgment, and place. Anishinaabe and Métis game designer and scholar Elizabeth LaPensée integrates gaming, land-based education, and technology to speak to representation and values.

“Part 4: Reconnecting” encourages and celebrates Indigenous futures. Revitalizing and reconnecting with identity and culture are featured in the final section, which asks readers to honor the depth of sharing within its pages. Nicola I. Campbell, the author of numerous children’s books, uses the two shape poems “alpine mountains” and “frog whisperers” to communicate the teachings of memory, belonging, and place. Colonialism impacts and Indigenous resilience is featured in Lil’watúl composer, singer, and producer Russell Wallace’s essay, which communicates the importance of culture’s fluidity, traditions, and how one can learn from metaphor. Anishinaabe artist and classroom educator Victoria McIntosh, also known as Biktoryias, demonstrates through the essay and artwork “Let the Children Play” the role of joy and play in learning through intergenerational stories. The section closes with Algonquin artist Christina Ruddy, who uses the art of looming to teach about beading, ethnomathematics, and cultural appropriation.

The book serves a need for middle and high school classroom Indigenous education content in the education community. However, in doing so, it will not be helpful to those teaching kindergarten to Grade 4 at all, with limited assistance for those teaching Grades 5–7 with only six lessons designed for those grades. An unjust critique, perhaps, but a reality of the collection: its strength is its weakness. The collection features 21 pieces of writing in 16 lessons. Although subjects like math and design are discussed in two lessons, the collection gears toward social studies, English language arts (ELA), and art. Educators with initiative and creativity could adapt or modify the lessons to fit into their science and math classes, but they fit into ELA effortlessly. An opportunity for subsequent collections or reprints

of *Resurgence* would be to include northern voices; for example, the Inuit. Diversity and representation under the Indigenous umbrella is arduous when considering all Indigenous nations within Canada. However, M'lot and Ferguson (2022) have shared teachings from multiple nations and cultural groups in this collection.

Resurgence allows educators to grow as individuals while gifting all of the necessary pieces to bring into the classroom and to learn together with humility. Thoughtfully curated by M'lot and Ferguson (2022), the book provides dialogue questions to pose to learners and suggestions to continue on the path to reconciliation in each lesson. Overall, this collection and its lessons would be a welcomed addition to any middle and high school teacher's toolkit.

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