Looking Forward: Preparing Yukon Teachers for Yukon Schools

Review of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program at Yukon College, 2011-2012

Thomas Fleming and Colin Chasteauneuf

Cover photograph is of the mural found in the entrance of Ghuch Tla Community School, Carcross, Yukon.

Looking Forward: Preparing Yukon Teachers for Yukon Schools

Review of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program at Yukon College, 2011-2012

June 15, 2012

Thomas Fleming
Emeritus Professor, University of Victoria

Colin Chasteauneuf
Professor, University of Northern British Columbia

Contents

1. Terms of Reference

We were invited by the administration at Yukon College to conduct an external review of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP) in July 2011. A review of this teacher education program was requested by the Yukon College's President's Advisory Committee on First Nation Initiatives (PACFNI), a committee that gives advice to the President on First Nations matters.[1] Subsequent public meetings and discussions have confirmed this call for a program review was broadly supported. On more than a dozen occasions, we heard people say that an external review was "long overdue" and they were pleased a formal review was underway since there had been, as several respondents put it, "no proper assessment" of YNTEP since its establishment in 1989.[2]

We undertook this review with open minds and with the understanding that education, in general, and teacher education, in particular, is studied in large part as a science but practiced, more often than not, as an art. For these reasons, we have tried to take the long view of teacher education and, wherever possible, to consider YNTEP's beginnings and development within the broad perspectives of time and context. We have likewise been mindful that challenges confronting YNTEP and Yukon education in 1989—when the program began—are not the only ones confronting it today, nearly a quarter of a century later. "Education evolves and so do visions, goals, and priorities," Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee advised readers in one of its reports.[3]

Accordingly, we have attempted to understand what the program originally tried to do, how it has evolved over time, what people consider the program's strengths to be, and where room for improvement now exists. In other words, we have endeavoured to look backward and forward as we considered what the people we've talked to said about one simple but critical question: *"How well-positioned is this program to prepare teachers for Yukon schools and Yukon society in the twenty-first century?"* Our main purpose in this review, simply put, is to point the way forward.

> *"How well-positioned is YNTEP to prepare teachers for Yukon schools and society in the twenty-first century?"*

With this broad question in mind, we agreed to carry out an academic review of YNTEP under the following conditions:

The review focuses on YNTEP's pedagogical foundations, the program's quality, and effectiveness in preparing First Nations and other teachers for Yukon's public schools.

First, that our review would focus primarily on the program's pedagogical foundations, its quality, and its effectiveness in preparing First Nations and other teachers for careers in Yukon's public schools. As such, we were less concerned with the program's contractual and financial aspects because we were not conducting a program audit. While these matters may impact teacher education, our emphasis centred on the program's contents and processes and, especially, its future capacity to prepare teachers for Yukon schools;

Second, that we were free to examine all curricular and academic documents pertinent to the program—past and present—and to meet with program participants and others familiar with its operations;

Third, that we could conduct this review in an independent manner and present a report consistent with our findings, professional knowledge, and experience;

Fourth, that we could conduct the review in a transparent manner and provide opportunities for students, faculty, administrators, program coordinators, advisory councils, educational civil servants, members of the public, parents, students, and other interested parties to express their views;

Fifth, that we could gather information about the program by holding public and other meetings, by distributing questionnaires, and by creating a website where anyone could present an opinion;

Sixth, that we could conduct the review in a way that respected the confidentiality of sources and would reflect as accurately as possible the essence of what

> was expressed, as well as the spirit in which it was expressed;
>
> Seventh, and finally, that we would present a written report after the end of May 2012 that rendered our professional judgment and recommendations about the program's strengths and weaknesses, its current value to students and graduates, and its efficacy over the past 20 years in preparing First Nations and other teachers for territorial schools [wherein] many of the dreams and aspirations that Yukoners hold for their children reside.

We took various steps to ensure that everyone who wished to make comment about YNTEP—and the priorities and emphases that should define teacher education in the future—had an opportunity to do so (see Background Information section of this report). We held three public meetings at Yukon College in the evening after advertising them in the local press; created a website outlining the procedures the review would follow and who we were; circulated questionnaires among First Nations communities and relevant units in the Department of Education; and advertised an online and confidential electronic questionnaire we constructed for students and the public to express their views.

Steps were taken to ensure everyone who wished to make comment about YNTEP could.

We also met with: YNTEP graduates, staff and some current students; the President's Advisory Committee on First Nation Initiatives (PACFNI) at Yukon College; the YNTEP Advisory Committee; Yukon Teachers' Association; Grand Chief Ruth Massie of the Council of Yukon First Nations and others in First Nations leadership; the Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC); Yukon College staff and administration; the University of Regina Faculty of Education administration; principals and teachers from Whitehorse and rural schools; and members of Yukon Department of Education. During working visits to Whitehorse, we were interviewed by members of the CBC and APTN media, as well as local print journalists from the *Yukon News.*

A final note about procedures is required. Three matters that came to our attention during this work fell outside the scope of the review: the post-degree experience for YNTEP graduates (the transition from teacher education to teaching); the importance of publicizing

education's value more vigorously in local communities; and the under-representation of First Nations educators in school administration. Because these matters were repeatedly mentioned, we have noted them for later consideration in the Background Information section of this report.

2. Review Procedures

This review was organized into five stages. Stage one involved identifying and cataloguing an archive of documents relating to YNTEP's operation and to the broad context of public schooling in the territory.[4] It also involved assembling a list of individuals to be interviewed who could provide first-hand and other information relevant to the program's operations.[5]

The second stage consisted of making four visits between September 2011 and May 2012 to Whitehorse and surrounding areas to meet with YNTEP students, instructors, program administrators and coordinators, advisory groups, school staffs, educational civil servants, and members of the media, as well as members of the public interested in YNTEP. Field notes from these meetings and consultations were prepared and coded according to source and subject. During this stage, questionnaires were designed, advertised, and distributed to solicit the views of students, First Nations' communities, Yukon teachers, as well as other groups and members of the public interested in the teacher education program.

Questionnaires solicited the views of students, First Nations' communities, Yukon teachers, and members of the public.

Stage three examined YNTEP's instructional foundations, particularly the program of studies that comprises the teacher education program, instructor's résumés, course outlines for the various components of the program, textbooks, as well as other learning materials pertinent to the contents of instruction. During this stage we compared YNTEP's structure and composition with those of other teacher education programs in Canada, particularly programs aimed at preparing First Nations teachers, programs preparing teachers for northern jurisdictions, and programs preparing teachers in general.

In stage four, we collated and analyzed responses gathered from completed questionnaires. Once more we sorted and organized data from these responses according to source and subject matter and identified anecdotal observations to be included in the fabric of the review.

In the fifth and final stage, we analyzed, evaluated, and synthesized materials from all sources to identify areas of consensus and suggestions for change. We then organized our data thematically into writing notes. These notes provided the basis of the general observations we make, the specific findings that define the current state of the program, the narrative lines that explain the program's past and present and, finally, the recommendations and program options we offer at the conclusion of this report.

3. A Tradition of Criticism in Teacher Education

Before this review proceeds, a few words are in order to describe the contemporary state of teacher preparation in North America. We offer these comments to illustrate the deep divisions that exist among teacher educators in Canada and the United States—as well as around the world—regarding whether teachers should be "trained" or "educated." We also wish to note the vibrant criticism that surrounds teacher education programs almost everywhere.

We are therefore obliged to recognize teacher education as a field of study that has remained in a state of turbulence since normal schools (teacher training institutions) were first commissioned in the mid-nineteenth century.[6] One historian of schooling recently summed up teacher education's troubled past this way: "the professional training of teachers has never enjoyed widespread public liking," nor have schools of education been traditionally "associated with either conventional academic success or with a love of learning."[7] Beginning with the public school's conception in the Victorian Age, normal school efforts to standardize teaching practices have been portrayed as destroying "the honourable and timeless art of teaching" by twisting it in "a technical and instrumental direction."[8] In searching to uncover a "science" of education, teachers' colleges have been castigated, on one hand, for eroding the place of the humanities in public education and, on the other, for condemning educational reformers to a never-ending series of methodological proposals that "lurch from extreme to extreme."[9]

In accepting a mandate to prepare teachers, training institutions wagered that good teachers did not have to be "born." By normalizing or standardizing instructional practices and contents, they could be "made." Outside teachers' colleges, others have remained far less sure about whether this approach works. For a century and a half, elite private schools and academies have continued to shun graduates of education programs in favour of employing academic specialists from arts and science faculties who have a passion for their subject and a demonstrable mastery over it.[10]

A debate rages in education faculties about what exactly should be reformed in teacher education and how.

Attacks on professional education programs—and on their allegedly shallow intellectual foundations—further intensified after the end of World War II when a new era of stinging criticism began. One Canadian critic devastatingly dismissed the substance of teacher education in 1953 as *So Little for the Mind*.[11] Writing in 1958 in the popular educational journal, *Phi Delta Kappan*, James Popham and Suzanne Greenberg chronicled a decade of "recurrent criticism of American teacher education appearing in popular and professional publications."[12] The avalanche of criticism was so widespread, they reckoned, that educators would have to restrict their regular reading to children's literature to escape notice of the general public disapproval directed toward them.[13]

Critics claim teacher educators perpetuate a transmission model of "teaching as telling."

Not much has changed even though normal schools were abandoned more than 50 years ago when teacher education programs moved to more prestigious quarters in colleges and universities. This move, however, has done little to quell a debate that still rages within and among education faculties—as well as in government and school corridors—about what exactly should be reformed and how. Across Canada, contemporary critics claim teacher educators ignore "the voices and needs of teacher candidates" by "promoting an unrealistic view of teaching, and perpetuating the transmission model of teaching as telling."[14] Locked in the grip of the past, teacher education programs frequently seem impervious to reform initiatives. "The snail's pace of change in teacher education," one writer observes, "is due in part to the numerous stakeholders involved in the formal—and informal—governance of teacher education . . . In many ways everybody is in charge of teacher education, yet nobody is."[15]

Despite good teaching's importance in raising student performances, many teacher education programs reflect an outdated vision of teacher education.

In the United States, a similar situation exists. Despite the unquestioned importance of good teaching in raising student performances, a recent national report suggests that the vast majority of America's teachers are prepared in sub-standard programs with low admission and graduation requirements, programs that almost universally reflect an outdated vision of teacher education.[16] Such findings are embodied in a four-year study, *Educating School Teachers*, authored in 2006 by Arthur Levine, former president of Teachers College, Columbia University, arguably America's most prestigious institution for teacher education since the late-nineteenth century. Levine dramatically concludes: "Teacher education is the Dodge City

of the education world. Like the fabled Wild West town, it is unruly and chaotic. There is no standard approach to where and how teachers should be prepared, and the ongoing debate over whether teaching is a profession or a craft has too often blurred the mission of education schools that are uncertain whether to become professional schools, or continue to be grounded in the more academic world of arts and sciences."[17]

Improving teacher education, at least according to Levine, means closing failing programs, expanding quality programs, making student achievement the primary indicator of successful preparation programs, and shifting the training of new teachers from master's degree-granting institutions to research universities.[18] Levine's study is but part of a larger chorus of alarm ringing out wherever teacher education programs are offered. Almost everywhere today this clamour for change is heard. Within this current climate of concern, calls for a review of YNTEP are easily understandable and quite unremarkable in themselves.

Finally, we are obliged to recognize that the design of a teacher education program—much less its delivery—is anything but a simple process. Few programs can be characterized by a clear and cohesive focus, or features that transparently announce their programmatic values. Outside of a handful or two of commonly titled courses (the contents of which may differ significantly), not much exists in the way of a consensual frame of reference among many programs, even if they appear similar at first glance. All-too-often programs appear to consist of little more than a jumble of vaguely defined courses—encrusted by time—and seemingly far removed from what practitioners continue to insist is "the real world of schools."

Lack of coherence in many teacher education programs is not surprising given that many of them reflect decades of constant tinkering by faculty and administrators wishing to embrace whatever was then new or faddish.[19] Nor it is surprising that myriad program objectives struggle for expression as different professors advocate for their own special interests. In some cases, it is a social justice emphasis, in other instances a technique-driven technical competency. Still other times, faculty members champion apprenticeship models or promote experiential kinds of learning, reflective approaches, or theoretical understandings. Small wonder that teacher education remains coloured by idiosyncrasy and discord! Today, 50 teacher

education programs can be found across Canada from the Atlantic to Pacific and from the 49th parallel to the Arctic Ocean.[20] Figuratively and literally, these programs are all over the map.

It should not be an impossible task to design a teacher education program that embodies Yukon's values and educational aspirations.

Having said this, we were repeatedly advised in this review that it should be possible to design a sound and high quality teacher education program. Likewise, we were advised that it should be possible for such a program to reflect the Yukon's values and educational aspirations. The Yukon's relatively small population, its special spirit, its self-confidence, and its deep-rooted tradition of northern resourcefulness were all factors, we were told, that could produce a consensus that might not be possible in other jurisdictions.

4. Development of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program

Documentary records and anecdotal evidence reveal that events leading to YNTEP's establishment took place during a five-month period in 1989. A Yukon government anxious to address the glaring absence of First Nations teachers in territorial schools decided to act by bringing teacher education to Whitehorse. At this time, only one of 435 teachers in Yukon schools was of First Nations ancestry, despite the fact that First Nations peoples at the time comprised about one-quarter of the territorial population.[21] The government's educational initiative has been broadly described as a delayed response to the 1973 report, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, a landmark document that helped usher in the process of redefining relationships between the 14 First Nations, the Government of Canada, and Yukon Government.[22] More immediately, it was also seen to be a response to the 1987 Kwiya Final Report that, once again, identified an inescapable need for First Nations teachers in Yukon schools.[23]

In 1989 only one of 435 teachers in Yukon schools was of First Nations ancestry, despite the fact that First Nations peoples comprised about one-quarter of the territorial population.

Expediency factored into YNTEP's creation. "The politicians were in a hurry," one observer recalled of the program's quick development to bolster First Nations representation in classrooms. A decision to purchase an already-established program in April enabled a September start-up. Much credit in this regard is owed to the Yukon Teachers' Association for their "enormously influential role in YNTEP" through the early support they provided and for serving as an information clearinghouse to publicize the new program.

Although the University of British Columbia had pioneered a well-respected post-degree teacher education program in Whitehorse in 1978—and continued to operate this program episodically at least until 1991—the Yukon government selected a pre-built elementary teacher education program for Aboriginal peoples from the University of Regina. Several reasons explain this decision. First, the University of Regina was regarded as a leader in teacher education for First Nations peoples in western Canada, having pioneered the

Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP, Regina) and the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP, La Ronge). The fact that the University already had programs "up and running," as well as a reputation for being sensitive to First Nations' needs, were influential factors in the government's decision to select the University of Regina's program.

Reasonable costs, cooperation, and an accommodating attitude were other reasons that explained why the University of Regina was chosen. Government was also greatly motivated by the fact that establishing a Yukon-based teacher education program would reduce some of the high "replacement" costs incurred in bringing southern elementary teachers "up north." Yukon government officials and their educational advisors also appear to have decided that other universities in western Canada were neither as well prepared, nor as capable, in mounting a program for First Nations teachers as expeditiously as the University of Regina. At the time, they were likely correct in concluding the University was "a good fit." From the University's point of view, YNTEP also represented a opportunity for a good partnership in light of the University's mission to be "one who serves" both "in and out of" its own community.[24]

With this decision, and a contract agreed, responsibility for the program—and authority for all academic matters—passed into the hands of the University of Regina, the degree-granting institution. The University would approve the program offered in Whitehorse and ensure that up to 15 seats would be made available annually for First Nations students to earn a four-year Bachelor of Education degree.[25] As part of the arrangement, the Department of Education established a separate budget envelope for YNTEP and installed it under the control of the program's executive director in Whitehorse. Even though the program was situated at Yukon College, it remained for much of its history as a "free-standing" program, neither completely connected nor directly accountable to the College. A source familiar with YNTEP's early beginnings suggested that, because Yukon College was recently established (1983) and still finding its way as a trades and technical college, it was disinclined to assume responsibility for a degree program in teacher education.[26]

The original objectives for YNTEP were set out as follows: first, to provide an educational opportunity in teacher training for people of Native ancestry; second, to ensure that people of Native ancestry

were adequately represented in teacher positions; third, to produce Native teachers who were sensitive to the educational needs of Native students and who could serve as models for both Native and non-Native students; and, fourth, to train and graduate students of Native ancestry as fully certified teachers.[27] During the first 15 years of its operation, YNTEP's candidates were exclusively First Nations.

Stated in more specific terms, YNTEP was created to offer a Bachelor of Education degree granted by the University of Regina. It would be a four-year degree program consisting of 124 credit hours of coursework (most courses consist of three credit hours), of which 88 credit hours would be education-based courses and 36 would be electives that reflected northern and First Nations content and the social sciences. In 2003, the program's instructional organization changed from three semesters a year to two semesters, in order to serve an increasing number of students not eligible for post-secondary funding.[28] Since the program began, YNTEP students have been "officially registered in both institutions by virtue of the delivery mode of the program; that is, they must be students of the University of Regina as well as students of Yukon College."[29]

Beginning with the Fall 2004 intake, six YNTEP seats were opened up to non-First Nations students.[30] Although a small amount of controversy surrounded this decision at the time, it appears in retrospect to have been a sound and necessary decision.[31] Applications to the program, which were usually fewer than 10 annually, appeared to be declining to the point where questions were being raised regarding the program's sustainability.[32] Opening up program spaces, however, helped ensure that a larger pool of potential educators were available to teach in cross-cultural environments.[33] For much of the past decade, YNTEP's entire student enrolment across the four-year bachelor's program has ranged from 32 to 39 students.[34]

Looking back to 1989, the government's decision to establish YNTEP can be characterized as a courageous and forward-looking initiative to raise the proportion of First Nations teachers in Yukon schools through an affirmative action program not universally appreciated at the time.[35] More than this, YNTEP offered an opportunity to reconnect First Nations peoples in a new way with formal school institutions that had ill-served them historically. Mission and church-run residential schools, which had functioned in Yukon until the late

1960s, had scarred First Nations peoples and left a bitter legacy of psychological, cultural, and social dislocation. YNTEP, in a small but symbolic way at least, offered an opportunity to begin a new relationship between First Nations peoples and Yukon educational institutions.

5. Findings

Content analysis of materials and data collected during this review has provided the following series of findings that helps situate YNTEP in its historical, social, and educational contexts, and to provide benchmarks to help identify its strengths and weaknesses.

5.1 Progress has been made in certifying First Nations elementary teachers

When YNTEP began, as earlier noted**,** only one of Yukon's 435 teachers was from a First Nations background. Even by 1993, there were still only three First Nations individuals teaching in Yukon schools. Things have improved appreciably since then in terms of increasing First Nations representation in Yukon schools. Between 1993 and 2011, YNTEP has produced 126 graduates of First Nations ancestry (see Table 1). About one-third (42) of this pool of graduates has obtained teaching positions in Yukon schools. Twenty-six graduates are teaching in Whitehorse and 16 graduates are teaching in rural schools. Five or six graduates are believed to be teaching elsewhere in Canada.

Between 1993 and 2011, YNTEP produced 126 graduates of First Nations ancestry.

By general standards, a respectable number of YNTEP graduates have obtained teaching positions. A rough historical rule-of-thumb holds that fewer than half the graduates of most North American teacher education program can be found teaching five years after graduation. Since its origins in the mid-nineteenth century, public school teaching has been an occupation conditioned, for the most part, by an oversupply of teachers and by high volumes of traffic in and out of the profession. When times are good, people leave teaching to pursue other careers and employment. When times are bad, people return to school and university to obtain academic credentials, teaching credentials included. Changes in regional and national economies, along with demographic and labour-force fluctuations, make it difficult to apply teacher supply and demand models with robust predictive success. Illustration of the practical difficulties

By general standards, a respectable number of YNTEP graduates have obtained teaching positions.

Public school teaching is an occupation historically conditioned by an oversupply of teachers.

associated with balancing teacher supply and demand are manifest in the fact that British Columbia will produce some 2,000 teachers in the 2011-2012 academic year, even though the province requires only some 700 teachers to fill vacancies in a K-12 system affected by declining student populations.

Table 1. *YNTEP graduates by gender, 1993-2011*

YNTEP Graduates	Female	Male	Total
1993	4	1	5
1994	8	1	9
1995	3	1	4
1996	6	1	7
1997	7	1	8
1998	6	1	7
1999	5	2	7
2000	8	0	8
2001	5	0	5
2002	3	2	5
2003	5	0	5
2004	6	1	7
2005	7	2	9
2006	3	0	3
2007	4	0	4
2008	7	2	9
2009	9	1	10
2010	5	1	6
2011	7	2	9

The success of YNTEP graduates in securing employment is reasonably good, certainly no worse than graduates of other elementary programs elsewhere.

Viewed in perspective, the success of YNTEP graduates in securing employment appears to be reasonably good and certainly no worse than graduates of other elementary programs elsewhere in Canada. A 2005 Yukon College report on YNTEP graduates showed that, as of October 13, 2004, 37 of the 78 YNTEP graduates were teaching in Yukon schools, six of the 15 people who had left the territory were teaching in schools elsewhere, and 11 were engaged in activities related to education.[36] Notable also is the fact that eight graduates at this time had never applied for a teaching position. All things considered, a teaching program in which nearly 70% of graduates find employment in some part of the education sector likely

surpasses the national average, particularly over the past decade when school enrolments, especially elementary enrolments, have declined relative to the general population along with employment opportunities for elementary teachers.[37]

Nevertheless, it is important to note that some distance must still be covered if increasing the representation of First Nations teachers across the system continues to be a government priority. Allowing that some 550 teachers comprise the Yukon system—and that fewer than 50 are First Nations teachers—the percentage of First Nations teachers constitute something less than 10% of the entire teaching cohort. In other words, Yukon has still a considerable way to go if it wishes to reach a closer balance between the percentage of First Nations teachers and the approximately 30% of First Nations students enrolled today in Yukon schools. Yukon is not alone in facing this challenge. Other Canadian jurisdictions find themselves in similar circumstances. Not long ago, for example, the Association of British Columbia Deans of Education went on record to say:

Some distance needs to be covered if increasing the representation of First Nations teachers continues as a priority.

> Faculties of Education in British Columbia have not been as successful as they could be in graduating sufficient numbers of Aboriginal pre-service teachers, nor have they provided adequate knowledge of Aboriginal education for all pre-service teachers. For these reasons and more, we are committed as an Association to: ensure that all pre-service teachers in our programs benefit from learning more about Aboriginal knowledge and education; work together to increase the number of teachers of Aboriginal heritage in British Columbia; and, similarly, work together to increase the number of faculty members in our programs who are of Aboriginal heritage. At least three times the number of current Aboriginal teachers is needed in order for the teaching profession to reflect the population demographics of Aboriginal people.[38]

In a 2010 draft report, the Council of Ministers of Education provided a literature review outlining the state of Aboriginal teacher education in Canada along with recommendations that are also worth reading.[39]

5.2 Yukon governments have consistently supported YNTEP

Problems in the program's development cannot be attributed to an insufficiency of support.

Although YNTEP appears to have prompted sharp questions in the legislature on occasion, as well as smatterings of public debate from time to time, the program appears to have been steadily supported and well-funded by all government administrations since its establishment.[40] As far as we can discern, no problem reported to us about the program's origins, development, or operation can in any way be attributed to an insufficiency of political or financial support. Since its establishment, YNTEP appears to have enjoyed all the resources it has required to carry out its program.[41] This commitment on the part of government is laudable and, generally speaking, such consistent support over the years is not always commonplace.

5.3 A Yukon-situated teacher education program is a source of territorial pride

In public and private meetings, in interviews with YNTEP students and former students, and in many responses to the questionnaires returned to us, it was made apparent that the location of a teacher education program at Yukon College is a source of immense pride to Yukoners precisely because it is home-based.

People celebrated the fact that "a university degree [is] available to Yukoners, especially those of First Nations heritage."

To the question we posed: *"What is good about the program?"* we received an array of responses such as: "That it is here in the Yukon" and that it is "located in Whitehorse." Others expressed pleasure the program was "local and northern," and that "a local location [existed] to obtain professional training."[42] Still others celebrated the fact that "a university degree [is] available to Yukoners, especially those of First Nations heritage." Someone else described it as "a dream come true." Another writer offered: "It is important for mature students to be able to go to school in Yukon." And, in case we did not completely understand what was being said, someone put it plainly that the program is good because it has a "Yukon-Yukon" focus.

The program should have a "Yukon" focus.

Three sub-themes ran through comments about the satisfaction people felt in having a teacher education program based in Whitehorse. One addressed the matter of accessibility and underscored the fact that Yukoners did not have to leave home to

pursue a teaching degree. Connected to this was a second theme related to the matter of affordability. Several individuals pointed out that teaching careers were within people's economic grasp simply because the program was based in Whitehorse. Someone else observed that it was probably cost-effective to offer such a program locally and for the Yukon not to incur the costs of recruiting teachers elsewhere. And, finally, a third sub-theme suggested, for teacher education to be effective in Yukon, the program must be operated locally and grounded firmly in Yukon values, history, and the cultural heritage of both First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

For teacher education to be effective, the program must be grounded firmly in Yukon values, history, and the cultural heritage of both First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

5.4 Two distinct educational worlds

We have learned in this review that the public schools of Whitehorse constitute one educational world and that the small schools of rural communities constitute another. According to many people who spoke to us, new teachers are more easily accepted in Whitehorse because it is generally a more forgiving educational landscape for new teachers to navigate.

Public schools of Whitehorse constitute one educational world, the small schools of rural communities constitute another.

By all reports, the situation is different in smaller and rural communities where teachers are sometimes obliged to engage in a long process of negotiation to build relationships with local people in order to create the educational conditions and support structures necessary to teach youngsters successfully. "Steps have to be laid out in advance," one principal advised, for a teacher to be successful. Experience in such settings is also deemed important, someone "who has been there," to use the idiom of the day, is far more likely to succeed than a newcomer. Teachers who choose to be in rural communities, another principal proclaimed, are demonstrably more effective with students than those who have not made this commitment.

In smaller communities teachers must build relationships with people to create the conditions and structures necessary to teach youngsters successfully.

We received many comments during this review about difficulties involved in preparing teachers for small and rural communities and, in some instances, about YNTEP's shortcomings in this regard. One respondent began this way:

> Some First Nations teachers, upon graduation, return to their home communities and are successful teachers

> who connect with the community at a deep respectful level. Other teachers cannot cope with the stresses of living in small isolated communities.

"The needs in smaller communities are much greater," someone else explained:

> Classes are often multi-grade and children experience a 'revolving door' of educators. Most teachers remain in the smaller communities for a short period of time (anywhere from one to three years on average). And, in many cases, these are first-year teachers with little or no classroom experience. As a result, rural children often lag behind their urban counterparts.

"The greatest needs are in our rural communities," someone else offered, "yet few grads apply to these communities. Often the demands of the job are so complex that a new educator does not have the skills or background to draw from to be successful. [So they] work in Whitehorse . . . this does nothing to get them back to their communities." Referring specifically to YNTEP faculty, someone else wrote: "I feel that they don't know enough about how things are in smaller communities. They don't really understand the dynamics, culture, or the traditions of the First Nations peoples in that area." Another agreed: "I do not believe [YNTEP] prepares people for the challenges of teaching in small communities, or for a clientele that is varied in its needs." "As long as three and four-grade splits happen in the communities," another respondent explained, "even experienced teachers will not be able to be effective." "Our small communities have the worst rates of educational success," another person added. "This is not the fault of the YNTEP program, but it certainly hasn't helped much."

"The greatest needs are in our rural communities, yet few grads apply to these communities."

Whether or not YNTEP graduates were actually committed to working in rural communities was another hotly debated subject in responses we received. "As a YNTEP student," one person began:

> I requested and arranged my own placement in a small community. I was, however, aware of students who refused to do a placement outside Whitehorse, and [whereas] rural placement was not supposed to be optional, I couldn't help notice that their preferences

were accommodated. This approach was not realistic and hardly prepared them for the realities of teaching in Yukon.

"The majority of YNTEP grads are able to use the First Nations preference hiring protocol in Whitehorse to avoid going to schools in the communities," someone else pointed out. Still others advised: "It would be interesting to determine how many of the graduates go out to the small communities and [what] their success rate [is] there." Another person from a small community observed: "You don't see YNTEP teachers in our schools: they either live in Whitehorse or move away once they obtain their degree." Someone else agreed: "The program still is too Whitehorse-centred with few graduates opting for rural education. Teachers are trained primarily in urban settings. There are no real incentives to consider rural placements. Students do not get as diverse an experience."

"The program still is too Whitehorse-centred."

Program graduates explained a reluctance to pursue teaching jobs in rural communities in several ways. One said: "Rural schools have few resources and supports for young teachers. The program does not adequately prepare students for success in this area." Another argued: "On the whole, students are not given enough financial and logistical support to access a rural experience; however, neither the program nor the instructors have adequate resources to offer these supports." "I taught in a rural school for a few years," a third person offered, "and discovered I was inadequately prepared to teach in a multi-grade classroom. It was a challenge to teach in a classroom with very diverse needs."

"I taught in a rural school for a few years . . . it was a challenge to teach in a classroom with very diverse needs."

What begins as a rural school problem affects much more than the rural communities. Secondary enrolment for some rural youngsters, as the *Education Reform Project Final Report* noted, involves a difficult transition from a rural to an urban setting that is "a major adjustment for many students." [43] The 2008 *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Summary Report* likewise emphasized: "Students entering secondary school in Whitehorse from communities not having their own secondary options often lack the same level of skills as students from Whitehorse." [44] According to the report: "Many struggle with the transition to secondary school, despite various support mechanisms." Such findings have obvious and important implications for YNTEP and for program developers charged with outlining the competencies new teachers require to be

effective, as well as finding people from rural communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to become a teacher.

5.5 Educational contradictions make teaching a vital and challenging career

During this review, we also learned the K-12 Yukon educational context is characterized by difficult educational and social contradictions. The interplay of these contradictions makes teaching a challenging career and, by definition, a job not suited to everyone.

Even with generous government support for schools—support that provides the lowest pupil-teacher ratios in Canada, state of the art educational technology, good teacher salaries and benefits, sound encouragement for professional development, and excellent school buildings—the overall performance of Yukon students has been disappointingly low.[45] Statistics show that Yukon students have the third lowest graduation rate in Canada, surpassing only those of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.[46] The Auditor General's 2009 report likewise pointed to serious performance gaps on standardized Yukon Achievement Test (YAT) average scores between First Nations and other Yukon students, ranging from 11% to 21% percent for the 2006–2007 fiscal year, a gap confirmed in the education department's own data on graduation rates.[47] The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program of Mathematics, Science and Reading (PCAP) held in 2010 for grade 8 students similarly reveal the problematic state of Yukon learning in basic subjects.[48]

Such findings do not square well with the substantial investment Yukoners have made in education, or with the territory's well-earned reputation as a jurisdiction characterized overall by high levels of education and training. The 2006 Census of Canada showed that over half (54%) of Yukon's 15+ population had a post-secondary accreditation of some kind—the highest such regional proportion. Of this 15+ population, about 21% of Yukon's population held a university degree, 21% had earned a college diploma, and 12% a trade certificate. An additional 24% had completed a high school certificate or equivalent. Statistical data prepared at Yukon College also proclaims that Yukon is comprised of the highest proportion of adults with non-university post-secondary education (36%) in the

The 2006 Census of Canada showed over half of Yukon's 15+ population had a post-secondary accreditation of some kind.

country, of which 34% are of Aboriginal background.[49] Overall, 23% of Yukoners who were non-First Nations had successfully completed a university degree, whereas only 8% of First Nations peoples had completed a degree.[50] Having said this, when the three northern Canadian territories were compared, Yukon's First Nations populations enjoyed the highest literacy scores with 45% of the population scoring at Level Three or above.[51]

Yukon's generally impressive level of educational attainment—along with a generally well-trained workforce—appears far removed from the problems schools face.[52] A constellation of diverse factors account for some of the system's problems and for youngsters' poor performances. For First Nations families, the tragic consequences of the church-run residential schools continue in the form of "severe cultural and spiritual dislocation," as one recent report put it, along with "long-term psychological, cultural and social dislocation."[53] About these inter-generational effects, the report wisely advised: "A child suffering from family strains is not likely to be an effective learner in any system of education."[54]

Educational and social problems for some First Nations children and families are many and deep-seated. In some instances, a veteran administrator observed, "families don't support children's reading," certainly to the extent they should, even allowing that their own levels of literacy are not high. "High risk" youngsters and "high risk" families were also cited as contributing factors to low student performance, as were family illness and chronic absenteeism. Not surprisingly, as one education department report pointed out, absenteeism is higher in rural communities than in Whitehorse and First Nations students, on average, miss more days of school annually than other youngsters.[55] This is certainly not helped by the fact that Yukon has a considerably shorter school year than most other Canadian jurisdictions.[56]

"The issues that are currently taking place are more worrisome than 30 years ago," one teacher wrote to us. "Until you are teaching in the schools," this individual continued, "you have no idea about the negative impacts that affect one's teaching—substance and alcohol abuse, dysfunctional families, grandparents raising grandkids, lack of parental support, lack of advocacy for children {and] poverty." "My first and second years of teaching my own class," another teacher

declared, "almost drove me to an early grave." Another long-experienced teacher likewise pointed to the changing social world around the schools and how it impacts on classrooms. When she began her career 30 years ago, teaching constituted 80% of her time and classroom management 20%. Now, she says, things have changed and 80% of her time is spent on classroom management. Along with such comments, we also received reports of "troubled schools," "troubled administrations," and the negative effects of transiency associated with "vacation" teachers and principals who sign on for positions but remain only long enough to burnish their credentials en route to jobs "down south."

A landslide of social problems confounds the educational system at all levels and undermines opportunities for youngsters to learn.

In summary, a landslide of social problems frequently confounds educators and the educational system at all levels and undermines opportunities for youngsters to learn and to succeed at school. Such difficult facts of educational life underscore the absolutely critical importance of attracting good teachers to Yukon schools and the Yukon's need for a teacher education program that recognizes these harsh realities and that can prepare teachers to be effective instructors amid such adverse social conditions and complex cultural pressures.

5.6 Program eligibility has dissolved as an issue

The program has benefited from a broader base of applicants.

"It is in the best interests of all Yukoners to have a teaching workforce that is truly representative of the population it serves, including—and especially—the Yukon First Nations population."

At public meetings, in interviews, and in the responses we received to the questionnaire we circulated, a modest amount of discussion took place about the 2004 decision to "open-up" YNTEP by making six seats available to non-First Nations applicants. Although we heard a few sharp comments that ending the program's exclusive character was a mistake, along with a few expressions of disappointment, a far larger body of sentiment was expressed that maintained the program has benefited from a broader base of applicants in terms of enriching the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of all students. As one person observed: "Having the program open to all applicants is great for meeting the needs of all Yukon residents in providing the option for an education degree at home." Someone else wrote: "I believe it is beneficial all the way round to have a First Nations [teacher] education program. It's great for First Nations to have that opportunity to become educators for our children, and great for non-First Nations to learn how to blend First Nations tradition and culture . . . into the regular teacher program." Still another endorsed opening up the program because it has resulted in good "cross-

cultural" effects. Finally, someone else put it another way: "It is in the best interests of all Yukoners to have a teaching workforce that is truly representative of the population it serves, including—and especially—the Yukon First Nations population."

In summary, both First Nations and non-First Nations graduates spoke of the opportunity to learn together as a "positive experience." A general appreciation was expressed that the program could not likely have survived as an exclusively First Nations teacher education program in light of the declining number of First Nations applicants in the years prior to 2004.[57] As one individual put it: "It's not an issue anymore, we've moved on from there."

Both First Nations and non-First Nations graduates said learning together was a "positive experience."

5.7 Concerns about quality undermine YNTEP's reputation

We learned from multiple sources during this review that YNTEP has long been dogged by criticisms about quality. Such concerns were certainly expressed to us as we conducted our work, although in far greater number and intensity by the end of this review than we could ever have imagined when we first began to collect data in September 2011. Stated bluntly, we were surprised by both the volume of issues related to quality, as well as the harshness of the criticism.

In the interest of maintaining a balanced perspective, we would like to begin by noting two things. First, a historical note about the organizational contexts that prompted some of the quality issues is in order. And, second, we would like to express what people said they liked about the program before turning to what they said they do not like.

Criticisms about quality obviously should not be excused but certainly can be better understood if we appreciate the circumstances that produced them. Throughout the program, it appears, program administrators were confronted with three difficult and recurrent problems. One was recruiting a sufficient number of qualified students to keep the program going. Here we would do well to recognize when YNTEP was jump-started in the spring and summer of 1989 little time was made available to recruit or prepare First Nations individuals with the credentials necessary to be successful in a teacher education program. We understand that middle-age female students were generally over-represented in the early intake groups,

that many of these individuals had failed to complete high school and, in some cases, had left school 20 years earlier.[58] Furthermore, they entered YNTEP as individuals who generally lacked the community support that NORTEP candidates received in a similar program in northern Saskatchewan. Entrants to NORTEP had been "selected in their home communities through interviews and a prioritization process by Band leaders or community school boards." [59] Not surprisingly, "with little or no consultation" either with communities or with Elders, and no real family or community support mechanisms in place, attrition was high in YNTEP.

A second problem involved finding ways to upgrade the knowledge and basic skills of students after they were admitted. The program's hasty commission meant that program staff had little or no time to create transition or "catch-up" courses to help the first cohort of candidates upgrade their academic skills. Sadly, development of such courses in the program's early years was generally not effective enough to give students the academic platform they required. Or, alternatively, the "catch-up" courses were so poorly sequenced in the program's overall schedule that they invariably proved ineffectual.[60] Certainly, this appears to be the case in later years.

Finally, program staff faced the problem of juggling a program schedule comprised of core and elective courses, pedagogical courses, unfinished high school work, and school orientation and practicums with students' time and energies. This invariably proved difficult in student groups marked by great variation in knowledge and skills. Students were not always cooperative, especially in completing make-up courses. Mature students sometimes complained they did not know if they had been admitted to a university program or simply re-enrolled in high school. Altogether, when the responsibilities, stresses, and problems of middle-aged people in a new and difficult environment were factored into this context, the tasks of student and program management became even more daunting. Looking back, such developments help explain YNTEP's long-standing problems with quality.

Students were enthusiastic about the extended practicum experience.

Having said this, let us turn now to what some people said they liked about the program. First and foremost, students were enthusiastic about the extended practicum experience. One person wrote: "In total, YNTEP graduates are required to complete seven months of practicum placements. This . . . allowed me to enhance my classroom

management skills, understand how schools function, [and] develop a rapport with staff and students. If you are . . . not leaving the Territory to acquire employment elsewhere, the practicum placement is an invaluable opportunity to get a sure footing in your career choice." Someone else observed that YNTEP students "get more exposure to the Yukon education system" than students in other programs because of "the longer practicum and internship times." Still another said the "practicums are where I learned the most for what I needed." Along with such opinions, other students expressed appreciation for the program's arts and science component, its cultural component, the priority given to First Nations applicants, schools and teachers' support, and the nurturing some faculty showed them.

Overall, however, YNTEP was praised far less than it was criticized.[61] Concern about the program's lack of quality was paramount in the majority of sentiments we catalogued. Categorical assessments of the program were, by and large, far more negative than positive. For example, a former YNTEP student pointed out that there was "a very great difference between the University of Regina Bachelor of Education and YNTEP." Another YNTEP graduate with experience in other universities suggested: "the quality of teaching is better at southern universities such as the University of Alberta." "I heard from other teacher graduates outside YNTEP that the program is not on par with other B.Ed. programs," someone else wrote. "There is a perception among public school teachers and officials," another observed, "that YNTEP graduates are not of the same calibre as those from other institutions."

Still another individual declared: "The underlying implicit view of the program [is that it] needs to change, that it's a mediocre degree, and . . . was only designed as a workplace diversity program." Someone else added: "When a YNTEP student does not have a great academic background . . . going into the program, they still do not have a great academic program coming out." A sponsor teacher assessed the program this way: "YNTEP seems to push many students through to graduation regardless of their academic abilities or standing. My experience in working with YNTEP students in Yukon schools was extremely disappointing. I felt . . . some student teachers were being promoted despite putting little effort into their training and that this left them ill-prepared to face the challenges of a

"The underlying implicit view of the program [is that it] needs to change."

classroom." One YNTEP graduate also pointed to the variation in student quality:

> Although YNTEP was a well-organized program whose courses were consistent with program goals, the quality of instruction and evaluation varied considerably . . . Having said that, my biggest concern centred on the evaluation of formal papers. There seemed a general lack of rigor in this regard. My course at Athabasca was one of only two courses over the four-year period where I felt that the professor truly understood and valued good English, and marked accordingly. I know there were students in my [YNTEP] cohort who were writing at a level consistent with early high school, yet these individuals completed a university degree. Is it any wonder that YNTEP grads are not always viewed favourably within Yukon's public school system?

Other comments strongly reinforced these latter sentiments. "Often the graduates are not skilled teachers, having lacked the proper education themselves to master the curriculum," one individual wrote. "The calibre of grads," another advised, "leaves much to be desired. Some of the grads are very dysfunctional and poor role models." "The YNTEP grads I know," still another weighed in, "were completely unprepared for their classes and the realities of Yukon communities." Someone else claimed: "The quality of the graduates is still probably better than the quality of the program."

During interviews with former graduates, teachers, administrators, and program staff, we tried to uncover the reasons for such negative perceptions about YNTEP and its students. From what we could ascertain, the program appears to be characterized by considerable variance in the academic preparedness of students who enter it, both year-to-year and within years. The words "uneven," and "weak" were applied more than once in this review when individuals sought to categorize student-intake groups.

A principal familiar with YNTEP graduates noted an extremely wide range of abilities. Similar kinds of training, the principal remarked,

does not invariably produce the same levels of pedagogical expertise in graduates. The principal's assessment was that the YNTEP graduates who get hired are unquestionably "the best teachers" the program produces. By the same yardstick, the principal figured that about 25% to 30% of YNTEP graduates are poor teachers and lack the requisite academic and instructional skills to be effective in a classroom. From various inquiries we made, we could only conclude that great variability exists in the background and capacities of students who enter the program and that admission criteria have generally been quite flexible and inconsistently applied over time. Someone close to the program verified this conclusion by remarking: "We don't turn many people down."

YNTEP graduates exhibit an extremely wide range of abilities.

Many negative views about the quality of YNTEP teachers are rooted in questions about the graduates' ability to teach reading, writing, and mathematics. Repeatedly, we heard the refrain: "YNTEP should . . . ensure that applicants to the program have a strong general knowledge base, academic minds, and are thoroughly skilled in the basic subject areas commonly taught in primary and intermediate classrooms." "There should be better preparation for students going into the program . . . especially for literacy and numeracy," another person offered. "I think critical thinking skills and a focus on literacy and numeracy skills are essential to prepare Yukon youth," someone else advised.[62] One former graduate confided: "I personally feel quite capable of teaching almost any class from grade 2 to grade 10, but this has as much to do with understanding the subject matter as it does with understanding the pedagogy. If I didn't have the broad general knowledge that I do, YNTEP wouldn't have prepared me for much beyond grade 4."

Teachers should have "a strong general knowledge, academic minds, and be skilled in the basic subject areas."

Better preparation is required for students going into the program, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Program priorities, someone else suggested, should include "making sure that the students can write well (good grammar), [have] good math skills and [take] course work that will help with their career choices . . . so our First Nations graduates do not have to do upgrading to attend the course of their choice." "The [YNTEP] teachers are not able to teach students even the basics," another complained, "so they are letting down all students, First Nations and non-First Nations." "They [YNTEP instructors] should be teaching them the basics that every person regardless of ethnicity needs to know," another offered, "and they should be able to do it in a culturally appropriate and relevant way!"

"Good basic skills and good critical thinking skills are essential."

"What's not covered properly in YNTEP is teaching kids to read," someone else charged. "Academic expectations are sacrificed," another wrote, "as there are a number of graduates with weak writing skills and weak abilities [insufficient] to develop even a comprehensive unit that integrates culture, language, and community into the regular academic program." And, finally, somebody else responded: "This program needs to improve the expectations and standards for students. The idea is not to produce numbers of graduates, but to produce graduates that have the skills to be effective teachers." "Many of the students I encountered were very weak in other common subject areas," another respondent observed, "and in the sort of general knowledge normally taught. Ultimately, this produces teachers who understand how to teach but have little to offer."

"This program needs to improve expectations and standards for students."

Parental criticisms of YNTEP graduates were, at times, particularly scathing. "Extra teaching at my home needed to be done, my children struggle at basic spelling and cannot write a short story. The basics are not being met," one parent complained. "I have worked with a colleague who was a graduate from YNTEP," another parent advised, "I would not want the graduate to be teaching my child due to very poor grammar, writing, and communication skills." "I don't understand the necessity to study First Nation language," someone else insisted, "this time should be spent learning more about teaching math. Graduates are not qualified to teach First Nations' language at schools upon completion, but they will be expected to teach math courses." "There are too many graduates who have weak writing skills," another concluded. "My son was taught by someone who went through the YNTEP program," another parent reported, adding:

> She had no basic skills. She could not teach cursive writing, her spelling and grammar were at a lower level than some of her students. Yukon College needs to make sure that people in YNTEP have the basic skills before they are accepted into the program. The program should then teach them how to teach to students at a variety of skill levels. My son's teacher was teaching to the students at the lowest level of the class, those with more skills were not challenged. I don't feel

> that my son received even a basic education for the years that he was with this teacher.

Even graduates themselves confess that many YNTEP students are weak in written language skills. An experienced First Nations educator advised us that many First Nations individuals lack English-language skills to the point they should be classified as English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) learners. A few YNTEP graduates openly admitted: "We did not even learn grammatical rules." One YNTEP graduate who began her program in the late-1980s and continues to teach, observed that she did not speak "standard English" when she applied to the program, nor indeed did other applicants in the incoming cohort of students she joined. She assessed her English reading and writing level upon point of entry "at about grade 7." This raised another intriguing question the review could not address. Allowing that substantial numbers of students reportedly entered the program without basic skills, how was it possible for a good number of them to earn degrees with "distinction" and "great distinction" four or five years later?[63]

Even graduates confess that many YNTEP students are weak in written language skills.

Such comments and questions evidently underscore the problematic nature of the admission and evaluation processes. About this, one YNTEP graduate advised: "Students would have benefited from more pre-program courses to assist with some basic skills to complete the course requirements." Another put it more simply: "The problem is preparation of students prior to entry." Still another suggested: "Better screening of applicants [is required] to ensure students are equipped with all the English, mathematics, history, and science a good teacher should command. Instructors should also be tested for their ability to read, write, and evaluate academic papers at the university level. English proficiency is critical for anyone entering the field of education and this must be stressed."

"Students would have benefited from more pre-program courses."

Altogether, the extensive catalogue of concern expressed above suggests several things. First, that affirmative action programs in education—or other areas of study—will always be susceptible to allegations about their candidates' poor academic quality until they prove otherwise over time. In YNTEP's case, professional and public concerns over the program's quality and that of its graduates remain very much alive after 23 years of operation. This signifies the program has failed to earn the broad confidence of the public, school personnel and even its own graduates. The fact that many criticisms

Professional and public concerns over the program's quality and its graduates remain.

of the program identify the inadequacy of teacher preparation in foundational areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic is hugely damaging to the program's reputation. [64] Teacher education programs—especially those aimed at preparing elementary teachers—simply must produce graduates who can read, write, spell, and do arithmetic. When all is said and done, the failure by program directors to develop effective preparatory courses for students—and their inability to ensure that certain standards of quality were met over an appreciable length of time—stand out as the program's two most glaring weaknesses and the root causes of the negative sentiments that have engulfed YNTEP. Cumulatively, such criticisms point strongly toward a reappraisal of the program's fundamentals, notably its admission standards and their application, and the efficacy of so-called "transition" courses meant to produce high school equivalency in basic subjects.

Teacher education programs must produce graduates who can read, write, spell, and do arithmetic.

5.8 Disagreement surrounds YNTEP's cultural component

Discussions about what should constitute YNTEP's "cultural component" easily prompted the sharpest and most contentious views expressed at public meetings, in interviews, meetings, and in responses to questionnaires. At times, the comments communicated a deep sense of disappointment, frustration and, in some instances, confusion with YNTEP and with things people associated with it. One individual remarked with evident regret:

Discussions about what should constitute YNTEP's "cultural component" prompted the sharpest and most contentious views.

> This is supposed to be a First Nation program reaching a percentage of Yukon First Nations' students, as well as First Nations from other provinces. We lost our way in the program [by] not achieving what it was supposed to do. [The] cultural component is lost—[there are] no core programs such as Native language which were to be put in years ago with [a] Native Language Centre right in the College but that was too hard to do, yet [we] send our students to Alaska to do the very thing with Native language instructors.

Several others questioned the faculty's linguistic qualifications. One wrote:

> How many staff members truly believe in the importance of being fluent in your language? How many staff are fluent in their language? This program needs to produce teachers that know their culture and that are fluent in their language, if it is to really be aligned with Yukon First Nations' goals for education . . . Have a look at all of the past studies on Yukon First Nations' education and language studies . . . there needs to be a fluency development program where the students and staff learn to speak . . . not just a few words and phrases and a bit of linguistics. What good is that if you can't have a basic natural conversation with a speaker? This program needs to change and needs to reflect what Yukon First Nations want and need in future educators!

Another asserted:

> The staff [must] have people that really genuinely believe in the importance of culture, language and, thus, identity to the success in one's life. Currently, staff say it's important, but this is not reflected in their actions or [in] how they live. How many staff members are fluent? Does the program produce fluent speakers needed to staff immersion or bi-lingual programs? Do the graduates have a course in teaching in immersion or bilingual settings? The current second language structure will make an unacceptable impact on the health of Yukon First Nations languages. [A] few words, a few phrases, memorized bits and pieces, and a little bit of linguistics is not acceptable!

Taken as a whole, comments about culture and language reflect deep divisions within First Nations communities about which aspects of culture, heritage, and language are most important to preserve and, therefore, should be preserved in curricula and passed across generations in school. The comments, at times, also reflected differences in views between First Nations and non-First Nations individuals regarding such things as the meaning and importance of

the past, the validity of different kinds of knowledge, and conflicting cultural views about the sanctity of time and place.

Accolades for YNTEP's cultural content were expressed but, overall, they were few in number. Speaking positively, one person wrote: "There are outstanding examples of cultural and heritage elements being integrated into the elementary curriculum by YNTEP graduates." Another added: "I see non-First Nations students in First Nations classes such as traditional knowledge, First Nations history, and other First Nations courses and think that students are learning about First Nations culture and heritage."[65]

"Sharing Yukon heritage, culture, and First Nations culture is an important aspect of education but global themes and realities must be shared too."

"Sharing Yukon heritage, culture, and First Nations culture is an important aspect of education," another respondent pointed out, "but global themes and realities must be shared too." "I don't care if you are First Nations or not," someone else answered, "you need to be a good teacher to be able to incorporate culture throughout the curriculum and to teach northern kids the way they learn the best." And, finally, someone else wrote: "I've seen YNTEP grads trying to teach culture at the expense of the basics and the result is that nothing is taught properly."[66]

Others quarrelled with the way the cultural component was delivered. One person wrote:

> The only area that needs a great deal of enhancement is the incorporation of Yukon First Nations Culture into the program's curriculum. Often textbooks for our cross-cultural courses were Native American content. Students often commented on how the program severely lacked Yukon First Nations cultural curriculum. Some Native students who are lacking knowledge of their ancestral background have an expectation that the program will provide them with this knowledge.

A former student likewise recalled: "We were taught to teach culture but it didn't focus on Yukon First Nations culture all the time. It was generic [about] ways to teach culture." Another writer argued: "YNTEP has had only limited success . . . in teaching . . . language, heritage, culture, and traditional knowledge [because they] are subjects that must be learned more than taught. They require a

holistic community approach." Someone else argued: "You can't teach culture. You live it and respect it." Still another said: "The question is problematic. We preserve things in museums. Languages, heritage, culture, and knowledge need to be living, referenced, and put into practice every day." "I did not acquire the skills needed to preserve Yukon First Nations languages, heritage, culture, and knowledge," a former YNTEP graduate confessed, "I acquired these skills at a later date." Still another response expressed the view that "language, culture and heritage are just not really implemented into the work plans." "Oh, and the faculty need a wake-up call," someone else pointed out: "They are not the experts in northern and First Nations education."

"We preserve things in museums. Languages, heritage, culture, and knowledge need to be living, referenced, and put into practice every day."

Even harsher still, someone else claimed YNTEP was "slapped together piecemeal and filled with irrelevant culture classes taught by non-First Nations people. You do not learn culture by sitting around a fire and making bannock. The goal should be to learn how to incorporate culture but, instead, it appears to be an effort to show that current faculty care about First Nations." "I am Yukon First Nations," another person complained, "and I felt there were many times non-native instructors just didn't understand me . . . I think this is because they are focused more on teaching the non-native students about First Nations." Another individual noted dismissively: "The culture camp was embarrassing and is a running joke to past and current students." Not everyone felt this way, of course: "Culture camp was really good," someone else wrote, adding my "First Nations culture teacher taught me things that I still do now."

Some comments addressing YNTEP's cultural component set out an extraordinarily ambitious cultural and linguistic agenda for teacher education—an agenda that any teacher education program would have difficulty delivering. However heartfelt, many of these comments did not seem to appreciate the constellation of educational and social responsibilities teachers already discharge, responsibilities that leave them little time to act as agents of linguistic and cultural preservation.

Some people set out an impossibly ambitious cultural and linguistic agenda for teacher education.

Others, however, grasped the fact that teacher education programs could not do everything. "I do not think it is YNTEP that is responsible for preserving language, heritage, culture and knowledge," one person wrote. Another declared: "I do not feel that collectively Yukon First Nations Governments, Yukon First Nations

Others grasped that teacher education programs cannot do everything.

people, non-First Nations people, and Yukon Government have seriously promoted the preservation of Yukon First Nations languages, heritage, culture and knowledge. This preservation is not the sole responsibility of YNTEP as it is impossible for one program to achieve this insurmountable task."

A final point about the program's scope and responsibility is this: the four original objectives initially outlined for YNTEP appear immensely modest when compared to the objectives many have entrusted to the program today.[67] It appears to have been forgotten by many that YNTEP began with no specified cultural responsibilities apart from preparing "Native teachers who are sensitive to the educational needs of Native students." Since then, expectations have been dramatically ramped up in this regard and we cannot help but wonder just exactly what forces in and outside YNTEP have served to create what is now an unachievable and untenable linguistic and cultural agenda for a teacher education program.[68]

5.9 YNTEP has not produced a "built capacity"

Presence of an "installed" or "built capacity" is a benchmark conventionally employed by program reviewers to determine whether a program—given sufficient time and resources—has been able to enhance its own human and intellectual capacity and thereby achieve a measure of self-sustainability. Sponsoring institutions often establish "built capacity" as a checklist item that must be ticked if fiscal support is to be awarded or renewed. Educational programs that do not aspire to build capacity as a key objective are generally considered to be programs of a second-order, much like "temporary" or "cohort-based" training programs that are created and discontinued from time-to-time according to educational and labour-force requirements.

"We need more Yukon First Nations people involved in teaching in the [YNTEP] program."

Keeping this in mind—along with the fact that YNTEP was originally designated to increase the number of First Nations teachers in Yukon schools—it is not surprising that questions were raised throughout this review about YNTEP's overall legacy and about what it has actually "built" over time. Part of this questioning issued from the scarcity of First Nations instructors in YNTEP.[69] "We need more Yukon First Nations people involved in teaching in the program," one person wrote. Another agreed: "it would help if there were more

real First Nations instructors." And still someone else advised: "since there has been a number of First Nations people graduating, there should be more First Nations teachers teaching [in] the program."

Listening to such comments, we wondered whether YNTEP's local directors, or University of Regina personnel, had ever considered sponsoring a program in Whitehorse to prepare a cadre of First Nations instructors for YNTEP.[70] Certainly, YNTEP's record in this regard pales in comparison to the University of Regina's SUNTEP where 90% of the core faculty are First Nations individuals.[71] In fact, generally speaking, YNTEP never proved as successful as other University of Regina teacher education programs in helping students who graduated with bachelor's degrees to enter master's programs.[72]

Questions were also raised as to why YNTEP never sought to broaden its programmatic base over a period of more than 20 years. More specifically, people inquired, why did YNTEP apparently give no consideration to preparing teachers for middle school, secondary school, or, even, specialist teachers for elementary schools. Similar questions were also raised about whether YNTEP had ever investigated the possibility of mounting 12 to 18-month post-degree teaching programs to train people already with degrees in "teachable" subjects. In fairness, of course, at YNTEP's inception the University of Regina agreed to offer a "service-program" that would deliver degrees and nothing more.

Nevertheless, this service-program model has not worn well. YNTEP's elementary program looks much the same as it did in its infancy nearly a quarter of a century ago. Even then, the program was not new in its contents or approaches. One source familiar with the program's earliest beginnings explained: "Someone came up here from Regina in 1989 with a bunch of NORTEP course outlines under his arm and that became the program."[73] NORTEP, it should be noted, was established 13 years earlier in 1976. It is not surprising, therefore, that YNTEP's syllabus appears dated. The program's courses and design exhibit little suggestion of change, growth, or the excitement of new ideas. There is something of a "same old, same-old" feel to the program. Nothing stands out.

Not that the 39 YNTEP courses are necessarily deficient in themselves. An analysis of their contents suggests they are no better or worse than many found in institutions across the land. But saying that

YNTEP courses are no better or worse than courses in other Canadian institutions.

YNTEP is comparable to many other programs—or indeed largely indistinguishable from them—is faint praise. It simply means that YNTEP inhabits a program "space" already occupied by dozens of other Canadian institutions, many of which are characterized by nondescript and unpopular programs that students roundly criticize. In short, in an increasingly fierce teacher education market characterized by shrinking public school enrolments, along with an oversupply of institutions capable of preparing teachers, YNTEP, as presently constituted, enjoys no special strategic advantage or "niche value" in attracting students.

A graduate addressed the program's generic character this way: "I think YNTEP is much like any other program in southern Canada. It claims to be different, but I don't believe it is. Another run of the mill program, with people from other places teaching and administering the program." Certainly, YNTEP does not compare well to leading teacher education programs today—programs that increasingly demand higher academic standards for prospective teachers, often the completion of an arts and science degree, lengthy internship experiences, a solid background in research questions and methods, and a capacity to apply research in classroom practices.[74]

The dated character of YNTEP courses may generally be traced to the fact that the University of Regina's faculty of education neither assessed YNTEP on a regular basis, nor ever commissioned an external academic review of the program since it began in 1989.[75] In addition, the University has not revised the courses that comprise YNTEP, even though it has renovated its own elementary programs in Regina in recent years.[76] These findings surprised us, especially the absence of an external review, allowing that academic institutions routinely call for program reviews every five to seven years.

We were likewise disappointed to find no records of periodic meetings beyond the first two or three years of the program's inception between senior administrators from the University of Regina, education department officials, or representatives from First Nations leadership to discuss the state of the program and to evaluate its relevancy. Except for regular contact with YNTEP's local program directors, and ceremonial visits at convocation by individuals not always directly connected to the program, the University has ostensibly not assessed in an independent way whether YNTEP was satisfying local needs. This suggests that the University likely never

knew whether the program enjoyed the full confidence of students, the public, and the schools or, indeed, if it required revision. Assessments of the program's condition appear to have remained confined to discussions between local program directors in Whitehorse and university administrators and staff thousands of kilometres away to the south. Whatever the case, such a truncated information and communication system likely explains why expressions of concern about student and program quality—particularly those uttered by people outside the program—went unaddressed.[77]

But perhaps this is only part of the story. The collaborative spirit and cooperative structures around which the program was conceived nearly a quarter of a century ago may also help explain the absence of internal and external reviews of YNTEP, along with the absence of a mechanism for ongoing program revision. In seeking to deliver a teacher education program for First Nations peoples—and to do it immediately—the Yukon government was obliged to rely on the University of Regina, some 2,700 kilometres away, to supply a franchise-type degree program, as well as to monitor local operations. It was similarly reliant on Yukon College to house the program, as well as on First Nations leadership for program support. Cooperation, collaboration, and trust among all parties—and the need to count on everyone's good offices—were no doubt elements that were essential in getting the program initially off the ground. Likely, no one at the time could foresee the very real communications problems that distance would create, or that complex organizational arrangements might blur lines of authority and responsibility. Even with the best of intentions, difficulties sometimes occur and, in this case, a lack of solid assessment data about the program, its students, and its administration eventually eroded public confidence in YNTEP and besmirched its reputation.

5.10 The theme of partnership

The theme of partnership was constant in much of what we heard conducting this review. On numerous occasions, First Nations and non-First Nations individuals elaborated on the importance of partnerships in designing and operating an effective teacher education program. Partnership was expressed in many ways: sometimes as a joint effort to support young teachers between First

First Nations and non-First Nations individuals stressed the importance of partnerships.

Nations communities and schools; sometimes as an opportunity for a closer relationship between YNTEP and YNLC in language training for First Nations and other teachers; sometimes as a shared enterprise between Yukon College and First Nations leadership in defining, designing, and delivering the core cultural component for teacher education; sometimes as an idea to integrate teacher education more completely into Yukon College's arts and science unit to strengthen the academic foundations of teacher preparation; and sometimes as a way of strategizing how to solve difficult educational problems (such as providing mentorship for inexperienced and beginning teachers) by bringing together individuals from First Nations groups such as the Yukon Council of First Nations, the Department of Education, Yukon College, the Yukon Teachers' Association, and school administrators.

6. Recommendations

On the basis of the preceding findings, we would now like to offer recommendations to guide future action. We characterize these recommendations as points of departure for discussion rather than prescriptions for change.

This review began by asking two broad questions: "*How well-positioned is this program to prepare teachers for Yukon schools and Yukon society in the twenty-first century?*" And, "*What changes should be contemplated to improve its effectiveness?*" We trust the following recommendations address both questions.

6.1 Yukon College should completely integrate teacher education into its academic, governance, and administrative structures

Many individuals who spoke to us during this review were critical of a pattern of autonomy that strongly characterized YNTEP throughout much of its history and that, on occasion, is still evident.

From the very beginning, YNTEP seems to have been considered—and considered itself—as a "special" program, not just in its singular mandate to increase First Nations representation in Yukon classrooms but, also, in the rather unique organizational structures and arrangements under which the program operated for so long.[78] As earlier noted, YNTEP was created in 1989 as an "instant program," delivered in Whitehorse but approved and certified from afar. Supported by a separate budget line from the education department, the program was situated at Yukon College and placed under the control of a local director who coordinated affairs in the Yukon on behalf of the University of Regina.[79] Two faculty advisors and an administrative assistant were hired to provide support for this director.[80] Fourteen students were admitted to the program in its first year.[81]

The historical record shows that YNTEP's pedagogical side functioned independently of Yukon College for many years and that the program's administrative and academic staff was only nominally accountable to senior executives at the College because program authority actually rested at the University of Regina.[82] Illustration of this can be seen in the fact that course outlines, faculty curriculum vitae, and student evaluations were routinely dispatched to Regina for approval.

Such a structure allowed YNTEP's directors to enjoy great latitude over the program's affairs because the University's capacity for supervision was greatly constrained by distance. Even more importantly, the program's financial independence meant that neither the program, nor its director, was ever dependent on Yukon College for anything but office and classroom space.[83] In addition, the program advisory committee, established at YNTEP's inception, does not appear to have been convened regularly by the directors throughout the program's history—certainly not enough to provide the supervision and accountability that, in hindsight, seems to have been warranted.[84] Moreover, about half the committee's composition in recent years consists of YNTEP graduates.[85] This composition is not ideal for two reasons. Graduates are too close to the program that produced them to exercise independent judgment, and are not equipped to bring experiences and perspectives from programs elsewhere to inform deliberations about YNTEP.

Complicating matters even more was the University of Regina's non-directive approach to the way it managed its chain of satellite programs. All-too-cognizant of the "colonial" style of administration that had far-too-frequently defined relationships between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples, the University, understandably, adopted a conciliatory and, wherever possible, "hands-off" administrative style, waiting for others to initiate change and to respond only when asked. No doubt, this, too, impacted upon normal supervisory checks and balances and enhanced the already-considerable latitude local directors enjoyed.

In retrospect, this long-established pattern of independence at YNTEP has not been good for the teacher education program. YNTEP students have complained about "a sense of isolation," as one person termed it, and that they never quite felt "integrated" into Yukon College structures. This spirit of independence likewise did not

oblige YNTEP to reach out to other academic units within the College or, indeed, to the YNLC, to build academic partnerships or synergies, or even to share human and other resources.

We cannot help but wonder how YNTEP would have turned out if, in earlier days, local directors had softened the program's image as a stand-alone "University of Regina program," and transformed it more into a "Yukon teacher education program delivered and certified by the University of Regina." According to a number of people, the sense of separation promoted by program administrators conveyed the notion that the University of Regina's program was far superior in quality to anything Yukon College could offer. We cannot imagine this attitude was useful in building cooperative and supportive relationships with Yukon College programs in the School of Access, Social Work, the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Science, or in its other divisions.

In summary, the complete integration of YNTEP is long overdue. It is time to dissolve all the old program structures in the interest of flexibility, responsiveness, and efficiency, as well as to dismantle whatever coordination and governance supports remain. No good is served in preserving YNTEP as an entity socially and psychologically removed from other educational programs and structures at Yukon College and one that sometimes makes students feel alienated.

No good is served in preserving YNTEP as an entity removed from Yukon College.

6.2 Yukon College should consider developing a Yukon-designed teacher education program

For several reasons, the time appears opportune for Yukon College to move toward delivery of its own teacher education program. First, with nearly 30 years of history behind it, Yukon College—and, indeed, the territory itself—has matured considerably and can now offer far stronger academic support for a degree program in teaching than it could when YNTEP began. Now, of course, Yukon College also enjoys the authority to grant its own degree.

The time appears right for Yukon College to consider its own teacher education program.

Second, it is worth remembering that YNTEP was never a program specifically designed for the Yukon—it was born in another place under another set of social circumstances and transplanted to Whitehorse as a stopgap measure. One study of the program's

beginnings described it as "a predominantly 'white' program" that required "further adaptation."[86] Moreover, the substantial amount of anecdotal data collected for this review clearly indicates that YNTEP's reputation is in tatters and that revisions to the existing program will not restore confidence in it among school professionals, the public, or students. The need to start again is obvious to everyone except those closest to the program and those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Third, we heard much support for developing a "home-grown" teacher education-program that would, in its contents, reflect the realities of Yukon life, the challenges teachers face in schools, along with the knowledge, competencies, and skills they require to be effective. As one respondent to the questionnaire put it: "Let's build a program unique to this unique place!" And one of the committees that spoke to us was equally clear: "Build a Yukon thing, not a copy!"

"Let's build a program unique to this unique place!"

We are greatly in favour of this idea and believe the Yukon can be successful in constructing its own teacher education program from the ground up by organizing it around the values and traditions of the communities Yukon College serves, incorporating the human resource strengths of Yukon communities, respecting parental and community aspirations for schools, and, addressing the special educational, cultural, and social needs of student populations. A great opportunity exists for Yukon College to sidestep much of the fractious commentary that currently divides thinking about teacher education, and to bring some much-needed and fresh thinking about what teachers require to work with the diverse learners and cultures that characterize Yukon schools and other schools across the north. Several knowledgeable educators expressed the view that, with the right teacher education program, they could see "no reason" why Yukon College could not become a national leader in northern and First Nations education.

Yukon College could become a national leader in northern and First Nations education.

The transition toward greater independence in delivering a teacher education program could occur over the course of a year or two. A College planning committee could clarify the supports and resources required to strengthen the College's arts and science schools and examine the academic and other implications of exercising the College's degree-granting authority. Other institutions offered a degree in teacher education as their first degree, including the

University of Victoria, soon to celebrate its 50-year anniversary in September.

Possibilities abound. The College, for example, could easily add to its own small group of arts and science professors, or augment this group on a short-term basis with well-qualified professors hired as sessionals from various western Canadian universities. With a core platform of academic courses in place, the College could select highly regarded practicing professionals (teachers with strong instructional reputations) to serve as faculty-associates, charged with providing instruction in key methodological areas, similar to the approach successfully pioneered decades ago at Simon Fraser University. Such an approach would certainly be cost effective and, probably, more or less in line with current program costs. A new program, built from the ground-up, might also be better able to consider how to integrate sessional instructors into "the whole picture or the whole vision of the program," as the College's 2008 thematic review put it, noting the current program's obvious difficulties in this regard.[87] Sessional instructors' complaints about the lack of feedback they received on their courses from program coordinators likely did little to encourage a sense of unity.[88]

Regardless of the decisions or choices that are made, a new program should begin by incorporating what the research literature points out as foundational to success in Aboriginal education, notably: "Strong leadership and governance structures, often with long tenure; high expectations for students; a focus on academic achievement and long-term success; respect for Aboriginal culture and traditions; high-quality staff development; and a wide range of supports for learning."[89] Useful advice for building a new teacher education curriculum and identifying core competencies for today's teachers in northern Canada may similarly be found in recent studies such as the *Guiding Principles for Western and Northern Canadian Protocol Curriculum Framework Projects*.[90]

A new program requires strong leadership, high expectations, a focus on academics, and respect for Aboriginal culture.

Obviously, a College decision to move toward granting its own education degree, or degrees, means honouring the contractual arrangement with the University of Regina until such time as it expires.[91] It is essential to ensure that students already admitted on the basis of this agreement have an opportunity to complete their studies and receive their degrees within a reasonable length of time. At that point the University of Regina's contributions to the

preparation of elementary teachers in Yukon for more than two decades should be formally acknowledged, noting the fact that YNTEP was the first university degree ever to be offered entirely in the Yukon. The existing contract, however, should not be renewed. Many who spoke to us during this review helped us see that the relationship with the University of Regina has achieved about as much as it can under the structures now in place.

Current and emerging challenges in schools and society argue strongly for a new and more comprehensive vision for teacher education that embodies local and global perspectives. We are convinced the time is right for Yukoners to re-imagine what a teacher preparation program could be and to encourage Yukon College to consider program options that will help it address the territory's educational needs today and for decades to come. Several program options are outlined for consideration in the report's final section of this report.

Finally, we believe it is prudent to re-designate the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP) the Yukon Bachelor of Education Program (YBEP). During this review much discussion was directed toward the program's name. Many people expressed the view that YNTEP was no longer a suitable name given the designation "Native" has long been replaced by "First Nations" and, also, that the program now welcomes non-First Nations candidates. A name-change, people generally agreed, would signal the birth of a new and exciting chapter in the history of teacher preparation in Yukon. Changing the program's name should by no means reduce the program's emphasis on recruiting First Nations students to become teachers. In fact, quite the contrary: we recommend the program re-double its efforts to interest First Nations people in becoming teachers.

Changing the program's name should not reduce the program's emphasis on recruiting First Nations students.

6.3 Yukon College should gradually expand teacher program options

Allowing that Yukon College decides to mount its own degree-granting program, it makes sense for the College to consider also the possibility of expanding its program options in teacher education. Certainly, during this review, we heard many positive comments in support of enlarging the scope of teacher education programming to prepare teachers at two levels—both for the elementary grades K-8 and the secondary grades 9-12.

Adding a secondary teaching option is appealing for several reasons. Because YNTEP has remained an elementary teacher education program since its inception, Yukon schools continue to depend on middle school and senior-secondary teachers from institutions in other parts of Canada. Without a capacity to prepare secondary teachers—either in the form of a designated Bachelor of Education program with a secondary emphasis, or a post-degree secondary program—the Yukon is therefore reliant on teachers who are not necessarily familiar with the culture and heritage of First Nations peoples, or with the history that makes Yukon a unique place.

The importance of a capacity to prepare secondary teachers in the Yukon—especially teachers of First Nations ancestry—assumes even greater significance in light of the fact that Aboriginal teachers across Canada are rarely found in the secondary grades "where Aboriginal youth are at greatest risk of dropping out."[92] We heard many people observe that a secondary teacher education program was especially warranted as a means of assisting First Nations teachers to find their way into high schools, and to permit experienced elementary teachers to upgrade their credentials should they wish to teach at senior grade levels.

Aboriginal teachers are rarely found in the secondary grades where Aboriginal youth are at greatest risk of dropping out.

Such ideas were definitely in the minds of people we met conducting this review. One YNTEP graduate spoke about incrementally building a new teacher education program, starting with a Yukon-designed Bachelor of Education program, then expanding to an 18 or 24-month post-degree program for secondary teachers and, finally, to a five-year Bachelor of Education for secondary teachers as a long-term goal. Others were no less ambitious. "Getting a first degree [in arts or science] then a teaching degree would be great," one young

person advised. Somebody else reminded us of other possibilities by saying: "other programs offer opportunity to do double majors and a variety of fields of study in one location." Still someone else pointed out: "much can be done to recognize credits from other institutions and provide a one to two-year program for any student with a degree in a teachable subject."

Certainly, we were strongly advised to underscore the importance of program flexibility in a new program, particularly in light of the limited flexibility that YNTEP has allowed to date. On this point, one individual wrote:

> YNTEP grads can only teach K-8. My biggest criticism is that, as a Bachelor of Social Work grad who has taken the exact same two years of arts and science as the YNTEP students, I would have to do another full four years at Yukon College if I wanted to be a teacher. This is totally illogical. I could attend another university outside the Yukon and get a teaching credential in one to two years.

A qualitative summary of the website questionnaire data we received provides some interesting starting points and advice worth heeding in the process of considering a new program or programs.[93] Answers to the question, "What recommendations would you make to change or improve the program?" clustered around the following items:

- Recruit excellent students who are motivated and have an aptitude for teaching and who meet high academic standards;

- Maintain high academic standards for students once they are enrolled in the program, and do not pass students who fail to meet these standards;

- Increase the focus on teaching in rural communities through work placements, teaching tools and supports, and encouragement for graduates to seek employment in rural communities;

- Provide supports to enable students to attain academic standards, with sensitivity to different dialects of English; and

- Increase the First Nation focus in the program, including languages, cultural understanding, traditional knowledge, land-based learning, and time spent with Elders.[94]

There is one more point we would like to make. For a teacher education program to be of high quality, it should have a strong core. Ideally, teachers should have an academic degree, especially in light of a twenty-first century economy based largely on knowledge and a well-credentialed Yukon workforce. A strong academic base assures the public, the profession, and students themselves that education graduates are well "educated" rather than just being merely "trained" in instructional techniques. Nothing gives students a broad background of general knowledge—together with discernible strengths in areas such as literature, history, mathematics, and science—than a solid arts and science background.

A new program should clearly identify the core foundational competencies that teachers require.

On this point, also, we would do well to remember Chief Elijah Smith's admonition at the ceremony marking YNTEP's creation. What he said about First Nations teachers should apply to all who enlist in a teacher education program:

> I don't want these teachers to have an easy program. I don't want them to have to go back to university for extra training after they are teachers. I want a first-class professional training for them. Make it hard but make sure it's good.[95]

A new program should honour Chief Elijah Smith's admonition.

More recently, another senior figure in First Nations leadership agreed by insisting that what was required in teacher education was "quality, quality, quality."

Turning now to the pedagogical side, we were informed a new program should also clearly identify the core foundational competencies that teachers should develop in the coursework they take, the practicums they experience, and the mentoring they receive. Throughout this review, we kept a running list of the competencies that people considered essential for teachers to be effective in Yukon

schools today. This list includes a facility to: work with youngsters who have learning difficulties such as dyslexia and FASD; manage classrooms marked by diversity; appreciate First Nations and Yukon culture and heritage; employ differentiated instructional strategies and cooperative learning; diagnose reading problems; clinically assess reading levels; design reading programs; develop individual education plans; guide and supervise educational assistants; be informed about children's health; and, finally, to be able to engage in long-range curriculum planning. Here, we should also note, grammatical skills in English, mathematics skills in general, and knowledge about science were particularly necessary program components for First Nations teachers.

A program comprised of fewer courses will produce a clearer focus for students and faculty.

Certainly, constructing an elementary program that is comprised of fewer courses than the 39 that now exist would also produce a clearer intellectual and practical focus for students, faculty, and administrators. All in all, we might portray the vision of teacher education that was cumulatively expressed to us this way. It should be a high quality academic program for teachers, imbued with a strong sense of local culture and history, one that offers individuals the opportunity to master the key instructional competencies necessary to function as an effective professional. At its heart, it should embody a judicious blend of "western" and "traditional" values, as well as "western" and "traditional" ways of knowing.

Teachers require a high quality academic program, imbued with a strong sense of local culture and history.

6.4 Yukon College should share responsibility for the cultural and linguistic component of the Yukon Bachelor of Education Program:

As noted earlier, the cultural component of the current teacher education program is presently mired in what can only be described as confusion, discord, and disappointment. It is also saddled with an agenda for cultural and linguistic preservation that, in our view at least, cannot be achieved by any teacher education program.

It would be best to begin anew with the program's cultural component. Through various mechanisms—established or yet to be conceived—Yukon College should explore ways to empower First Nations peoples to design and deliver language, heritage, and cultural programs that are relevant to their own needs, to the

requirements of a teacher education program, and to the preservation of Yukon's heritage in general. Some who spoke to us have suggested, for example, that Yukon College should develop partnerships with First Nations communities and encourage First Nations organizations to develop cultural and heritage programs that could be recognized and credentialed by Yukon College. Alternatively, others suggested that a First Nations unit in Yukon College, in collaboration with First Nations groups, could develop courses that would qualify as the cultural, heritage, and language component in a teacher education program. We note in this regard that the College's 2008 thematic review also identified a need for a greater number of First Nations instructors, particularly for courses with predominantly First Nations content.[96]

Still others have pointed out that a first step in this direction might be for Yukon College to appoint an Elder-in-residence who could provide sound counsel to young teachers-in-preparation from both First Nations and non-First Nations communities. As one person advised: "Preserving Yukon First Nations languages and cultures occurs through developing relationships with local Elders and keepers of traditional knowledge."

An Elder-in-residence might also be able to play a leadership role in reconstituting, clarifying, and making the cultural component of the teacher education program more relevant and manageable for all teacher education candidates. We have been advised on numerous occasions that the current program could never supply the requisite linguistic and cultural components for teacher education due to the fact that Elders, who comprise an essential element of instruction for First Nations students, were never represented in the instructional faculty.[97]

Several people we spoke with raised the matter of YNTEP's relationship with YNLC. "YNTEP students should attend literacy and training sessions offered by the Yukon Native Language Centre," one person advised. Another called for amalgamating "YNTEP and the . . . language revitalization program into one." Along with many of the individuals we interviewed, we were struck by the organizational solitudes that seemingly separate YNTEP and YNLC. On this matter, we conclude that YNTEP's own long-standing traditions of independence and separateness—and its principal identity as a University of Regina program—made collaboration with YNLC

impossible. Conversely, we conclude YNLC has been willing to share knowledge of local systems of language and culture and has been open to collaboration with YNTEP for some considerable time. YNLC demonstrated this collaborative spirit in earlier years by providing resource speakers for one of YNTEP's introductory linguistic courses, despite incurring some costs and scheduling difficulties itself.

Looking at the two structures, there appear to be several interesting opportunities where these two programs could produce some important synergies.[98] Currently, the YNLC offers a certificate and a diploma program in Native Language instruction, both of which are accredited by Yukon College's academic council. As matters stand, the YNLC has an articulation agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to transfer a block of 45 credits acquired at Yukon College toward the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Native Language Education and the Bachelor's degree in Native Studies. It would only make sense, we believe, for a similar arrangement to take place between YNLC and Yukon College if students with a diploma in Native Language instruction wished to transfer to the College's teacher education program.

Such an arrangement, we appreciate, has important implications for the status of instructors at YNLC and, more importantly, for the independent administration of the YNLC as a Council of Yukon First Nations' (CYFN) program. Since YNLC's current mandate far transcends a transfer of course credits to colleges and universities, any change in YNLC's relationship with the teacher education program would naturally involve CYFN in partnership with Yukon College.

We are obviously not the first to suggest that greater cooperation in applying resources could be of advantage to both education and language programs. The *Education Reform Project Final Report* speculated at some length about the various advantages that might accrue if the activities of these two programs were better aligned.[99]

6.5 Yukon College should campaign to raise teacher education's profile

One weakness that has haunted YNTEP since its inception is the problematic academic backgrounds of some program candidates, notably in reading, writing, mathematics, and general knowledge—along with an insufficiency of support measures to assist prospective teachers in upgrading their basic skills.[100]

These difficulties could be alleviated in several ways. Vigorous efforts could be made to encourage degree-holders in teachable areas to consider a career in teaching. Efforts could also be made to identify academically talented young people in middle or high school and to provide support and career planning for them through generous scholarships, future-teacher clubs, and college access programs.

Vigorous efforts should be made to encourage degree-holders in "teachable" areas to consider a career in classrooms.

A recent British Columbia study offered similar advice in this regard:

> Teacher education programs should develop proactive outreach efforts to encourage and mentor Aboriginal high school students to consider teaching as a future career. [The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples] even suggested that teacher career efforts could begin in later elementary grades. These efforts go much beyond attending school career fairs and setting up an information table. Future teachers' clubs, interactive websites, mentoring programs, sending personalized letters to Aboriginal students encouraging them to think about a teaching career are some suggestions of proactive initiatives. Teachers, principals, and other school staff could identify students who have an aptitude or "gift" for teaching and encourage or mentor them. University teacher education students could design a teachers' club or interactive website. Aboriginal high school students may become more motivated to complete required academic courses needed to enroll in teacher education programs if they have a future career path. These initiatives could also help Aboriginal high school students acquire the necessary academic and study skills in the areas of

Teacher education programs should develop outreach efforts to encourage and mentor Aboriginal high school students.

> English, writing, and mathematics. Aboriginal knowledge, community-parent-Elder involvement, and Aboriginal perspectives must be a core part of these recruitment and mentoring strategies.[101]

In short, much work can be done to raise teaching's reputation as a career, to publicize the intrinsic and extrinsic values of a teaching degree, and to identify, well in advance, academically able First Nations and other young people who could be successful in classrooms.

6.6 Yukon College should establish a transition committee to consider the review's recommendations:

YNTEP's early history amply illustrates the difficulties that occur when organizations are pressured by time and circumstance to move too quickly. Accordingly, in view of the complex social, pedagogical, cultural and other issues we touched upon in this report, we recommend that Yukon College establish a broadly based transition committee to consider the foundations for a new teacher education program. This committee should be tasked with reflecting on the findings and recommendations of this review, assessing their value, and considering the options for a teacher education program capable of addressing the Yukon's complex educational, cultural, and social needs. For symbolic reasons, such a committee would signify a complete break with the past and be assisted in its deliberations by a sub-committee of highly skilled people who are experienced in both public school leadership and in teacher education programs in northern and western Canada.

7. Looking to the Future: Program Options

The final section of this review does two things. First, it examines the programmatic foundations of YNTEP and the program's apparent limits in providing a platform for the future development of teacher education in Yukon. And, second, it outlines three options that a transition committee might wish to explore in their discussions about the future character of teacher preparation in the territory.

7.1 YNTEP's character and limits

Since 1989, the principal route to teacher certification in Yukon has been through the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program. The Bachelor of Education program offers 39 credit hours of academic course work and approximately 84 credit hours of professional preparation. In terms of program composition, 32% of YNTEP coursework is academic preparation and 68% is professional preparation (Figure 1).

In many education programs across Canada, a ratio of 60% academic preparation and 40% professional preparation is standard for pre-service teacher programs. For secondary school teachers, the requirement for a post-degree program, following an initial bachelor's degree, generally produces a ratio of 66% academic and 33% professional preparation. In most five-year education programs, the 60:40 ratio normally translates into three years (90 credit hours) of academic preparation and two years (minimum 60 credit hours) of professional preparation. In other words, a minimum of 150 credit hours is usually required to meet the requirements of a five-year degree.

Although minimalist four-year programs like YNTEP still exist, they are reminiscent of an earlier time when it was assumed (incorrectly, we believe) that teachers transmitted knowledge to children, and children did not require knowledge that exceeded what teachers could learn in the four years of academic and professional preparation

required to complete a degree. As scholars began to realize that children's learning was far more complex than establishing a series of associations and connections, the value of a well-educated and well-prepared teacher became more evident. Across Canada, the actual credit hours in professional preparation programs still varies widely, as different jurisdictions impose different requirements for certification.[102]

Minimalist approaches to academic requirements present a real challenge in the preparation of classroom teachers and, on balance, do more harm than good. They generally imply to students and the public-at-large that teachers require little academic preparation—and that the teacher's role in the classroom is to render the curriculum as expressed in curriculum guides and little else. We believe that if a teacher's academic knowledge is constrained to what they learned in high school—and one year of university—they are insufficiently prepared and will not be successful. YNTEP's required academic courses are a case in point. They are mainly found at the lower 100 and 200 levels—English 100, Math 101, Theatre 200, for example—and provide a little breadth but no real depth at all in content areas.

As Figure 1 illustrates, YNTEP's 39 academic credit hours are organized as follows: 18 credit hours (six courses) are at the 100 level; nine credit hours (three courses) are at the 200 level; and, 12 credits in four approved electives can be at any level. The possibility therefore exists that as many as 30 credits could be at the 100 level with only nine credits at the 200 level. Such a distribution would not be considered adequate academic preparation for elementary teachers in many Canadian jurisdictions. Education programs elsewhere commonly require as much as 60 credit hours of "teachable" area coursework of which 30 credit hours (10 courses) are at the senior (300 and 400) level. YNTEP's curriculum, for example, does not satisfy the University of Regina's requirement for four senior-level electives in its Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP).

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Course Work	Course Work	Course Work	Course Work
EPS 116 – Communication Skills	EPSY 205 – Understanding and Enhancing Student Development	EPS 205 – Principles and Practices of Elementary Teaching	EADM 310 – Educational Administration: Structure and Process
PHED 222– Introduction to Northern Outdoor Pursuits	ELNG 205 – Language and Literacy Development	ELNG 325 – The Teaching of Writing	Approved Elective
ENGL 100 – English Composition	EPE 215 – Physical Education in the Elementary School	ESST 215 – Social Studies for Elementary School Teachers	Approved Elective
ATHA 101 – Introduction to Native Languages	ENVS 100 – Environmental Science	EHE 215 – Elementary School Health Education	Approved Elective
FNST 100 – Introduction to First Nations Studies	EMTH 215 – Mathematics in the Elementary School	EPSY 225 – Assessing Student Learning	EFLD 405 – Elementary Internship (4-month placement)
EFLD 105 – Practicum	ESCI 215 – Introduction to Teaching Elementary Science	ECCU 300 – Cross-Cultural Teaching Strategies	
EPS 100 – Introduction to Education: Principles and Practices	EPS 215 – Principles and Practices of Elementary Teaching	ELIB 216 – Children's Literature and the Elementary School	
MATH 101 – Introduction to Finite Math	ERDG 215 – The Teaching of Reading	EPSY 322 – Students with Special Needs	
ENGL 101 – Introduction to the Study of Literature	ECCU 200 – Introduction to Cross-Cultural Education	ECMP 355 – Introduction to Computers in the Classroom	
ATHA 102 – Introduction to Native Languages II	EAES 215 – Introduction to Arts Education	EFLD 305 – Practicum	
THEA 200 – Introduction to Acting I	EFLD 205 – Practicum	Approved Elective	
	ECCU 390 – Yukon First Nations Culture and Values (Summer Camp)		

Key:	Academic Preparation	Professional Preparation

Figure 1. *Framework, courses, and course categories for YNTEP*

Similarly, when compared to the requirements of other programs, YNTEP's professional preparation coursework appears excessive in that it accounts for 68% of the coursework required for the degree, and much of this coursework appears badly out of date. Out-of-date coursework should not be attributed to a failure on the part of course instructors, in light of the fact that instructors are required to teach the course content prescribed by the university calendar. In YNTEP's case, the courses have been on the University of Regina's books for many years. Our examination of course outlines and textbooks reveal that course curricula are generally appropriate for calendar descriptions of the courses, and that these courses are common to other education programs. All in all, it is fair to say that YNTEP is a program old in both its organization and content and, as such, would serve as a poor platform for future program development.

Although YNTEP's courses are not necessarily deficient in themselves, they are marked by certain anomalies. For example, the "Principles and Practices of Elementary Teaching" topic in the YNTEP program of studies currently occupies nine credit hours of coursework (EPS 100, EPS 205, and EPS 205). Comparison of outlines for these three courses shows a considerable amount of overlap. Put simply, these three courses could easily be collapsed into a single course. Similarly, we note that two courses are intended to introduce students to First Nations languages' structure and vocabulary, yet no course exists to provide second language teaching methods.

YNTEP is also characterized by its inflexibility. Because it was originally structured as a closed program, YNTEP students are required to complete four years of coursework within the program's structure to obtain a Bachelor of Education (Elementary) degree.[103] Individuals who have completed one to three years of university course work at other institutions, or who have completed university degrees in subject areas directly related to teachable subjects in schools, are ineligible to enlist in YNTEP unless they are prepared to start from the beginning and complete yet another four-year program. It is highly unlikely that anyone would ever choose this option because the time and costs would make it prohibitive. Moreover, it would make absolutely no sense for degree-holders who have completed 300 and 400 level academic courses to re-take courses at 100 and 200 levels in order to complete YNTEP.

Furthermore, because YNTEP is capable only of preparing elementary teachers, there is currently no provision for people with undergraduate or graduate degrees to become secondary teachers in Yukon, even though their degrees may contain teachable subject areas.[104] This represents what is potentially a great loss in human resources for secondary schools since Yukon has the most highly credentialed and educated workforce in Canada when measured in earned degrees.

Such factors point clearly to the need for a new beginning and for the consideration of program options more in line with what Yukon schools and society require today. We believe two starting points are worth keeping in mind. First, sound academic foundations should remain the cornerstone of whatever options are considered.[105] And, given the territory's small population, economy-of-scale considerations should feature prominently in future program development, ensuring that program options are orchestrated in a concerted way. For example, elementary and secondary programs could both be grounded in a common platform of core courses that could be supplemented, as required, with specialized courses offered on a sequential basis. On the basis of what we have learned during this review, three options seem most worthy of examination.

7.2 Option 1: A two-year post-degree Bachelor of Education program

A two-year program could be developed as a stand-alone post-degree program. A significant advantage of a stand-alone two-year professional preparation program resides in its flexibility to adapt to different circumstances as needed.

Establishing such a program would allow individuals who have already obtained an undergraduate degree to enroll in a post-degree Bachelor of Education program. Courses in a consecutive program could be designed to accommodate professional preparation for all teachers, with differentiated instruction being provided to accommodate knowledge and understanding of developmental differences between elementary, middle, and secondary students (Figure 2).

<table>
<tr><th>Entry Points</th><th>Area</th><th>Academic Preparation</th><th colspan="2">Possible YBEP Education Program</th><th>Degree Granted</th><th>Certification</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Four-Year degree (BA/BSc)</td><td>SECONDARY</td><td>Minimum 120 credit hours of acceptable academic course work

To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include:
(a) 6 credit hours of approved English,
(b) 48 credit hours in 1 secondary teaching area, OR
(c) 24 credit hours in each of 2 secondary teaching areas</td><td>Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education</td><td>Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education

Minimum 72 credit hours of education course work including practicum</td><td>B.Ed. Degree (Secondary)</td><td>PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Secondary)</td></tr>
<tr><td>ELEMENTARY</td><td>Minimum 120 credit hours of acceptable academic course work
To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include:
(a) 18 credit hours must be in approved English (6), math (3), science (3), and Canadian studies (6), and
(b) 60 credit hours must be in teachable elementary subject areas</td><td>Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education</td><td>Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education

Minimum 72 credit hours of education course work including practicum</td><td>B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)</td><td>PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 2. *Post-degree Bachelor of Education program*

7.3 Option 2: A five-year Bachelor of Education program

The same two-year stand-alone program could also be a component of a five-year consecutive program consisting of 90 credits of academic work and two years of professional preparation (Figure 3). Prior to applying to the two-year Bachelor of Education program, students would accumulate 90 credit hours in general academic coursework (for example, English, mathematics, science, social sciences, and other courses related to elementary classroom instruction). Academic coursework could also include First Nations' academic coursework in language and culture (for example, language, literacy, and culture). The 90-credit option would be available only to individuals wishing to become elementary school teachers since secondary teachers must have an initial degree in an acceptable academic area, plus post-degree professional training.

Entry Points	Area	Academic Preparation	YBEP Education Program			Degree Granted	Certification
90 credit hours completed	ELEMENTARY	**Minimum 90 credit hours** of acceptable academic course work To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include: (a) **18 credit hours** in approved English (**6**), math (**3**), science (**3**), and Canadian studies (**6**), and (b) an additional **42 credit hours** must be in teachable subject areas	Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education		5-Year B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)

Figure 3. *A five-year Bachelor of Education program*

Requiring students to complete 90 credit hours of acceptable preparatory academic course work would allow people outside the program, notably teacher certification authorities, other academic programs, the public, and potential employers to have confidence that teachers are graduating with substantial knowledge of subject areas taught in elementary classrooms. Students entering the program could likewise be confident that, with appropriate course selection, they would be well prepared to teach.

The curriculum content of the 90 credit hours of academic study is normally split into two components: 30 credit hours of course work in any area; and 60 credit hours of course work in teachable areas for the elementary level. Thirty credit hours would be at 100 and 200 levels, and 30 credit hours at the 300 and 400 levels.[106]

Thirty credit hours of coursework in any area would provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge in areas that may not be directly related to teaching, but would enhance the depth of their background knowledge. It would also provide an opportunity for Yukon College to expand its 300 and 400 level courses and, thereby, enhance its own built-capacity.[107]

7.4 Option 3: Developing an incremental route to a Professional Teaching Certificate and a Bachelor of Education degree completion program in First Nations Language and Culture

Developing an incremental route via a Professional Training Certificate and, subsequently, a Bachelor of Education degree completion program might help answer three vexing questions. First, "how can we encourage greater numbers of First Nations people to consider a career in teaching?" Second, "how can we use educational programs to support First Nations language and cultural revitalization?" And, third, "how can we provide an "eased entry" approach for First Nations teachers to allow them to be more successful in transitioning into teaching?"

Other jurisdictions have already taken steps to address these questions and their experiences are worth examining. In British Columbia, for example, a "community-based" approach has been taken for some time. The First Nations Education Steering Committee, a province-wide body, negotiated an agreement with the British Columbia College of Teachers — at that time the teacher certification authority—that empowered individual language and culture groups to negotiate with post-secondary institutions to provide, as a rule, two years of post-secondary language and culture academic coursework and one year of professional coursework. Specifics are determined by the particular language and culture groups. Wherever sufficient numbers of students exist, these programs are delivered at the community level.

Completion of the program leads to a Developmental Standard Term Certificate (DSTC), awarded either by the college or university or granted by the certification authority. The DSTC remains valid for a period of four years—with a possible extension for an additional four years if the student continues to take additional academic or professional preparation coursework. After completion of the DSTC, or following time spent in the classroom teaching language and culture, students can then "ladder up" their credentials by taking an additional two years of academic and professional coursework. In doing so, they earn both Professional Certification and a Bachelor of Education degree in First Nations Language and Culture.

At the University of Northern British Columbia, agreements were signed between the University and different First Nations groups to provide education diploma programs at the community level comprised of First Nations Language and Culture courses and selected professional preparation. These programs led to Language and Culture Certificates and Diplomas and, then, to an Education Diploma in First Nations Language and Culture. Students who successfully completed the Education Diploma were recommended for the DSTC. To date, programs have been developed and delivered locally in Nisga'a language and culture (Nass Valley), Ts'msyen Sm'algyax (Prince Rupert), Gitxsanimx (Hazelton), Dakelh (Fort St. James) and a single program to several different bands comprising both Carrier and Wet'suwet'en language and culture groups (Burns Lake to Moricetown).[108] Many students have subsequently laddered-up and completed the Bachelor of Education Degree completion program, and have been recommended for professional certification. First Nations groups in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have also successfully negotiated agreements with territorial and provincial teacher certification authorities, leading to successful community-based education certificate and diploma programs in the territories.[109]

Turning to Yukon, we note that a route to teacher certification in Yukon already exists through the YNLC Native Language Instructor Program and has existed for some time. Efforts to document and promote Yukon Native languages reach back to 1977 when the Yukon Native Languages Project began. In 1985, it was re-named the Yukon Native Language Centre [YNLC]).[110] During the linguistic and cultural renaissance of the 1970s, interest emerged and grew in seeing First Nations languages taught in Yukon schools. And, since this time, the number of language trainees and teachers has grown steadily.

As matters currently stand, individuals who successfully complete either the YNLC certificate or diploma programs are recommended to the Yukon Department of Education's teacher certification authority for the Native Language Instructor (NLIP) teacher certificate. Figure 4 illustrates the academic and professional requirements for the NLIP.

	CERTIFICATE PROGRAM				DIPLOMA PROGRAM	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		Year 4	Year 5
	Course Work	Course Work	Course Work		Course Work	Course Work
TERM 1	LS 141.1 – Language Structure	LS 142.1 – Language Structure	LS 143.1 – Language Structure	TERM 1	English Language	IP 241 – Individual Project
	SLTM 151.1 – L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 152.2 – L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 153.2 – L2 Teaching Methods		SLTM 251.1 – Advanced L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 252.1 – Advanced L2 Teaching Methods
	PRO 161.1 – Professional & Classroom Management	PRO 162.2 – Professional & Classroom Management	PRO 163.2 – Professional & Classroom Management		PRAC 281.1 – Advanced Practicum	PRAC 282.2 – Advanced Practicum
	PRAC 181.1 - Practicum	PRAC 182.1 - Practicum	PRAC 183.1 - Practicum		Elective	Elective
	LIT 171 – Native Language Literacy	LIT 172 – Native Language Literacy	LIT 173 – Native Language Literacy			
TERM 2	LS 141.2 – Language Structure	LS 142.2 – Language Structure	LS 143.2 – Language Structure	TERM 2	LIT 271 – Advanced Literacy	LIT 272 – Advanced Literacy
	SLTM 151.2 – L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 152.2 – L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 153.2 – L2 Teaching Methods		SLTM 251.2 – Advanced L2 Teaching Methods	SLTM 252.2 – Advanced L2 Teaching Methods
	PRO 161.2 – Professional & Classroom Management	PRO 162.2 – Professional & Classroom Management	PRO 163.2 – Professional & Classroom Management		PRAC 281.2 – Advanced Practicum	PRAC 282.2 – Advanced Practicum
	PRAC 181.2 - Practicum	PRAC 182.2 - Practicum	PRAC 183.2 - Practicum		CC 291 – Computers in Curriculum	CC 292 – Computers in Education

Key: Academic Preparation | Professional Preparation

Figure 4. *Framework, courses, and course categories for YNLC*

It is interesting to note that the composition of NLIP, based on number of course offered, is 30% academic preparation and 70% professional preparation, a similar composition to that of YNTEP today. However, because the NLIP program focuses on teaching First Nations languages, its academic and professional preparation content is determined by YNLC.[111]

We believe, if sufficient interest existed on the part of YNLC, an Education Diploma in First Nation Language and Culture could be developed under their auspices that would lead in time to a Professional Teaching Certificate and a Bachelor of Education degree completion program.[112] The program (see Figure 5) would work this way: following completion of the Education Diploma in First Nations Language and Culture—and the receipt of a Standard Teaching Certificate—teachers would have two options: going directly into a classroom to teach First Nations language and culture; or "laddering-up" to a Bachelor of Education degree completion program.

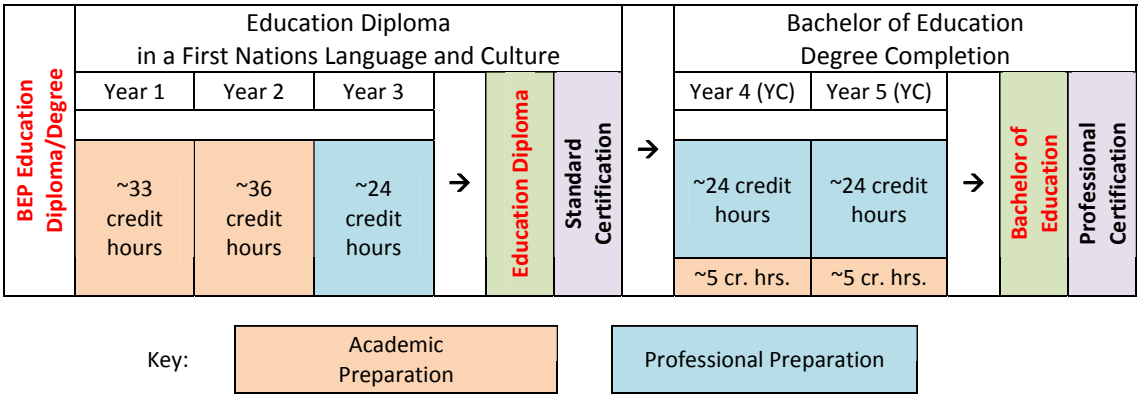


Figure 5. *An incremental route to a Bachelor of Education degree completion program in First Nations Language and Culture*

The Bachelor of Education Degree completion program would be distinct and stand apart from the Bachelor of Education degree program because it involves meeting special requirements. Only students who successfully completed the Education Diploma in a First Nation Language and Culture would be admitted to the Bachelor of Education Degree completion program. Figure 6 outlines the character of such a program.

Area	Academic Preparation (In the description below, items (a), (b), and (c) would be completed as the Education Diploma in a First Nation Language and Culture)	Bachelor of Education Degree Completion Program			Degree Granted	Certification
ELEMENTARY	**Minimum 92 credit hours** of academic and professional course work including: (a) **~51 credit hours** of academic course work in First Nations language, culture, and linguistics (b) **18 credit hours** must be in approved English (**6**), math (**3**), science (**3**), and Canadian studies (**6**), and (c) **23 credit hours (1 year)** in professional preparation coursework (d) sufficient additional academic credits (~10) to meet the 150 credit hour requirement for the Bachelor of Education degree	Complete Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Complete Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education	*Complete required **credit hours** (~48) of education course work including practicum*	5-Year B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)

Figure 6. *Bachelor of Education Degree completion program. Note that the Education Diploma and the Degree Completion Program is available only in First Nations Language and Culture*

Figure 7 below provides an overview of all the program options discussed above.

Entry Points	Area	Academic Preparation	YBEP Education Program		Degree Granted	Certificate
Post-Degree option	**SECONDARY**	**Minimum 120 credit hours** of acceptable academic course work To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include: (a) **6** credit hours of approved English, (b) **48** credits hours in 1 secondary teaching area, OR (c) **24** credit hours in each of 2 secondary teaching areas	Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education *Minimum **72 credit hours** of education course work including practicum*	**B.Ed. Degree (Secondary)**	**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Secondary)**
Post-Degree option	**ELEMENTARY**	**Minimum 120 credit hours** of acceptable academic course work To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include: (a) **18 credit hours** must be in approved English (**6**), math (**3**), science (**3**), and Canadian studies (**6**), and (b) **an additional 42 credit hours** must be in teachable elementary subject areas	Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education *Minimum **72 credit hours** of education course work including practicum*	**B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)**	**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)**
90 credit hours completed option	**ELEMENTARY**	**Minimum 90 credit hours** of acceptable academic course work To meet minimum certification requirements following professional course work, the academic course work must include: (a) **18 credit hours** must be in approved English (**6**), math (**3**), science (**3**), and Canadian studies (**6**), and (b) **an additional 42 credit hours** must be in teachable subject areas	Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education *Minimum **72 credit hours** of education course work including practicum*	**5-Year B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)**	**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)**

Figure 7. *Overview of program options*

Entry Points	Area	Academic Preparation	YBEP Education Program			Degree Granted	Certificate
Education Diploma in First Nations Language and Culture	ELEMENTARY	**Minimum 92 credit hours** of academic and professional course work including: (a) **~51 credit hours** of academic course work in First Nations language, culture, and linguistics (b) **18 credit hours** must be in approved English (**6**), math (**3**), science (**3**), and Canadian studies (**6**), and (c) **~23 credit hours (1 year)** in professional preparation coursework	Complete Year 1 Professional preparation courses in education	Complete Year 2 Professional preparation courses in education	*Complete required **credit hours** of education course work including practicum*	5-Year B.Ed. Degree (Elementary)	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (Elementary)

Figure 7. *Continued*

Endnotes

[1] PACFNI is composed of educational representatives from each Yukon First Nation and plays an instrumental role by assisting Yukon College to increase the effectiveness of its programs and services. More specifically, PACFNI has a mission to support Yukon First Nations in building capacity and in implementing their final agreements.

[2] Some sentiments expressed about the need for a review were strident in tone. One person, for example, declared:

> I have to say that I'm glad the program is being reviewed as this is long overdue . . . It appears that YNTEP got lost in the flurry of activity surrounding the signing off and implementation of Yukon First Nations' Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements. Perhaps this program has run its course, and it is time for Yukon First Nations to focus their attention on other priority programming areas. Fear of change can bring programs, organizations and governments to a standstill. In order for YNTEP to be successful there must be a renewed vision, mandate, and commitment from YFN governments, Yukon citizens and the Yukon Government.

Somebody else offered a different reason for reviewing the program: "I would start from scratch! Pause the program and build a new one that's reflective of today's Yukon. It's so sad that our students have a stigma when they come out of the program and it should be open to anyone who wants to be a good teacher in the north." Still someone else pointed out: "First Nations people are not doing very well, as far as Education goes. This program has been in place for over 20 years but it has not had the desired effect."

[3] Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee, *Helping Students Succeed: Vision, Goals, and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education* (Whitehorse, YT: 2008), 6.

[4] Collecting documents and papers for this review was, at times, challenging, as was the task of assembling a chronological archive to chart the program's historical development. The program coordinator informed us that YNTEP's files, generally speaking, were "not good" due to the press of events and the scope of the coordinator's own workload. This absence of a "paper trail," we learned, ranged from documents that described the program's early development to syllabuses for courses currently offered. In the latter regard, we were informed that course outlines were outdated, some as much as 10-years old, and that the coordinator was in the process of revising them. The identification of documents and papers for this review proved difficult and, at times, frustrating. "The program does not really exist on paper," was one explanation a staff member provided regarding the lack of program documentation. "Course outlines do not speak for us," was another. All in all, it was no secret to anyone that several members of YNTEP's staff were highly resistant to the idea of an external academic review and, at times, were non-cooperative.

[5] In preparing for this work, we read assorted documents, including some sources that people we spoke to recommended as "foundational" in understanding the Yukon's context, as well as the social and other forces that shaped YNTEP's establishment. In chronological order, they are: The Council for Yukon Indians, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow: A Statement of Grievances and An Approach to Settlement By the Yukon Indian People* (Brampton, ON: Charters Publishing Company, 1977); Kwiya Final Report, *Towards a New Partnership* in Education (Whitehorse, YT: Government of the Yukon, 1987); Ronald Wright, "Beyond

Words," *Saturday Night* (April 1988), 38-46; Yukon Education, *Partners in Education: The Yukon Education Ac*t (Whitehorse, YT: Queen's Printer, 1990); C. J. Pettigrew, "Yukon Native Language Instructors: The Struggle for Recognition," *Women's Education des femmes*, Vol. 8. No. 1 (June 1990), 15-18; Umbrella Final Agreement Between the Government of Canada, the Council for Yukon Indians, and the Government of the Yukon, 1993; M. Taylor, L. Goulet, P. Hart, I. Robottom, and H. Sykes, *Yukon Native Teacher Education Program: Beginning the Story* (Regina: University of Regina, 1993); Report and Recommendations to the Council of the British Columbia College of Teachers Concerning the Application from The SIWIIXO'OSXWIM WILNATAHL GITKSAN Society and the University of Northern British Columbia for a Teacher Education Program Leading to a Developmental Standard Term Certificate in First Nations Language and Culture (2003); Dawn Macdonald, *Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP): A Study of Those Graduates Not Teaching in Yukon Schools, Final Report* (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon College, 2004); Department of Education, *Public Schools Branch Annual Report 2003–04 (*Whitehorse, YT: Government of Yukon, 2004); Aboriginal Teacher Education Task Force for the Association of British Columbia Deans of Education, *Aboriginal Teacher Education in British Columbia: A Plan for 2006-2011 (*September 2006); Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report* (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon Department of Education, 2007); Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee, *Helping Students Succeed: Vision, Goals, and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education* (Whitehorse, YT: 2008); Proactive Information Services, *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Summary Report* (Whitehorse, YT: 2008); Statistics Canada, *Educational Portrait of Canada, Census 2006 (*Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2008), Cat. *No. 97-560-X2006001;* Yukon College, *Thematic Review of Health, Human Services, and Education* (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon College, 2008); Elizabeth Bosely and John Reid, *Sunrise: The Report to Yukon College on the Training Needs and Dynamics of Yukon First Nations* (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon College, 2008); Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Report of the Auditor General of Canada: Public Schools and Advanced Education, Yukon Department of Education (*Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General, 2009*)*; Andrew Kitchenham and Colin Chasteauneuf, "Teacher Supply and Demand: Issues in Northern Canada," *Canadian Journal of Education* 33, 4 (2010): 869-896; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, *Aboriginal Teacher Education: A Literature Review with Recommendations* (Toronto: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2010); Council of Ministers of Education (Canada), *PCAP-2010: Report on the Pan-Canadian Assessment of Mathematics, Science, and Reading* (Toronto: Ontario, 2011); Yukon Bureau of Statistics, *Public School Enrolment 2011*, retrieved January 27, 2011, http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/fr/pdf/schoolenrolment_2011.pdf; and Canadian Council on Learning, *What is the Future of Learning in Canada* (Ottawa: The Canadian Council on Learning, 2011).

[6] Teacher training institutions were designated "normal schools" in the nineteenth century because their primary tasks were held to include "normalizing" instructional techniques for teachers and the contents of instruction for youngsters

[7] George D. Perry, "The Grand Regulator:" The Mis-education of Nova Scotia's Teachers, 1838-1997 (unpublished manuscript, 2011), 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., x-xii. Perry makes a convincing case that opposes the professional school model of teacher preparation. He argues that nothing is standardized about great teachers except their intellectual dimension and, often, their eccentricities differentiate them in positive ways from other teachers. He points out the personal enthusiasms of individuals are key elements that define good teachers. Quite simply, they are interesting as people and, therefore, as teachers. If you regulate their behaviour, Perry advises, as in "regularizing" how they instruct, something vital is lost.

[11] Hilda Neatby, *So Little For the Mind: An Indictment of Canadian Education* (Toronto: Clark, Irwin and Company, 1953).

[12] W. James Popham and Suzanne W. Greenberg, "Teacher Education: A Decade of Criticism," *Phi Delta Kappan* (December 1958), 118.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Tom Russell, Suzin Mcpherson, and Andrea K. Martin, "Conference and Collaboration in Teacher Education Reform," *Canadian Journal of Education,* 26, 1 (2001): 30. http://www.csse-scee.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE26-1/CJE26-1-Russell.pdf, retrieved March 26, 2012.

[15] A.R. Tom, *Redesigning Teacher Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 7. Cited in Tom Russell, Suzin McPherson, and Andrea K. Martin, "Conference and Collaboration in Teacher Education Reform," *Canadian Journal of Education,* 26, 1 (2001): 30. http://www.csse-scee.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE26-1/CJE26-1-Russell.pdf, retrieved March 26, 2012.

[16] Arthur Levine, *Educating School Teachers: The Education Schools Project (2006),* http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf, retrieved March 25, 2012.

[17] Ibid., Levine's assessment of teacher education as chaotic harkens back to a warning issued a decade earlier: "Institutions preparing educators should either adopt reforms that link their educational contributions closely with schooling . . . or surrender their franchise. See The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*, (East Lansing, Mich.: The Holmes Group, 1995), 6.

[18] Levine also found that education schools based at master's degree-granting institutions—where a majority of teachers are trained—have lower admissions requirements, less impressive faculty, and higher student-to-faculty ratios than those based at research universities. Interestingly enough, no significant differences were discovered in student mathematics and reading achievement scores between teachers trained in nationally-accredited institutions and those at non-accredited institutions.

[19] Teacher-education programs are also conditioned by myriad factors outside colleges and universities. These include a sense of educational and social urgency on the part of government and politicians, spurts and declines in population growth, demographic shifts in the numbers of old and young, the influence of special interest groups in schooling, the availability of financial and human capital, as well as issues of political and institutional convenience.

[20] Teacher preparation programs are listed here by province in alphabetical order. Alberta**:** Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta; Faculty of Education, University of Alberta; Faculty of Education, University of Calgary; Faculty of Education, Concordia University College of Alberta; Teacher Education Program, King's University College; Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge; British Columbia: Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia; Education Department, Malaspina University-College; Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan; Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University; School of Education, Trinity Western University; School of Education, Thompson Rivers University; University College of the Fraser Valley Adult Education Degree Program; Faculty of Education, University of Victoria; Manitoba**:** Faculty of Education, Brandon University; Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba Division de l'éducation, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface; University of Winnipeg; New Brunswick: Faculté des sciences de l'education, Université de Moncton; Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick; Education Department, St. Thomas University; Newfoundland: Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Nova Scotia: School of Education, Acadia University Education Department, Mount Saint Vincent University; Éducation, Université Sainte Anne; Department of Education, St. Francis Xavier University; Ontario: Faculty of Education, Brock University; Faculty of Education, Lakehead University;

École des sciences de l'éducation, Université Laurentienne; Faculty of Education, Nipissing University; School of Education, University of Ontario Institute of Technology; Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto; Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa; Faculty of Education, Queen's University; Department of Education, Redeemer College; Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario; Faculty of Education, University of Windsor; Faculty of Education, York University; Teacher Education Application Service (TEAS); Prince Edward Island—Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island; Quebec: School of Education, Bishops University; Department of Education, Concordia University; Département des sciences de l'éducation, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi; Département des sciences de l'éducation, Université du Québec à Montréal; Faculté d'éducation, Université de Sherbrooke; Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université Laval Faculty of Education, McGill University; Saskatchewan: Faculty of Education, University of Regina; College of Education, University of Saskatchewan; and Yukon: Yukon Native Teacher Education Program, Yukon College.

[21] The 2006 census showed that Yukon was comprised of 30,195 people of whom 7,580 were First Nations. Fifty-four percent of First Nations people lived in Whitehorse at the time the census was taken.

[22] The Council for Yukon Indians, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*.

[23] Kwiya Final Report, *Towards a New Partnership*.

[24] Interview with education dean and associate dean, University of Regina, September 28, 2011.

[25] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2.13.

[26] This meant that, nominally at least, YNTEP remained under the education department's jurisdiction.

[27] Appendix B to the Formal Agreement for Yukon Native Teacher Education Program dated March 1990 described YNTEP's objectives as preparing teachers who were knowledgeable about: current instructional methods; assessment and evaluation techniques; child development; child-centered approaches to teaching and learning; and a multi-cultural approach to teaching that embodied First Nations' culture and the uniqueness of northern society.

[28] Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 66.

[29] Taylor et al., *Beginning the Story*, 15.

[30] Macdonald, *A Study of Those Graduates Not Teaching in Yukon Schools*, 11.

[31] Because electronic records for YNTEP were not established until some of its administrative structures were merged with Yukon College in 2004, and because the program's paper records were disorganized or incomplete, it was difficult to establish to what extent enrolment in the program was tailing off.

[32] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2.13.

[33] Macdonald, *A Study of Those Graduates Not Teaching in Yukon Schools*, 11.

[34] Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 62.

[35] See Appendix C, Formal Agreement for Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (March 1990), 13.

[36] Ibid., 4.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Association of British Columbia Deans of Education, "Aboriginal Teacher Education in British Columbia," 1.

[39] Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, *Aboriginal Teacher Education.*

[40] Searching questions about YNTEP's operation, for example, were asked in the legislative records of the Public Accounts Committee Evidence, Thursday, February 5, 2004. www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/hansard/33-legislature/005.pdf - 2012-03-22, retrieved January 19, 2012.

[41] YNTEP Budgets, 1998-2011

Year	Amount
1998/1999	$495,000
1999/2000	$500, 000.
2000/2001	$500, 000.
2001/2002	$500, 000.
2002/2003	$520, 000.
2003/2004	$520, 000.
2004/2005	$540, 000.
2005/2006	$540, 000.
2006/2007	$540, 000.
2007/2008	$540, 000.
2008/2009	$540, 000.
2009/2010	$540, 000.
2010/2011	$540, 000.
2011/2012	$540, 000.

[42] Website responses to the questionnaire item, "What is good and should not be changed? centered around the following points: the program is available locally; it is open to students of non-First Nations ancestry; priority is given to First Nations applicants to the program; First Nation culture is an important component of the program; some good teachers have graduated from the program and are teaching Yukon children; the practicum experience is valuable; and there are instructors in the program who are caring and nurturing of student success. See Dawn Macdonald, *Yukon Native Teacher Education program Evaluation Survey: Summary of Qualitative Analysis* (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon College, 2012), 5.

[43] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2.10.

[44] Proactive Information Services, *One Vision, Multiple Pathways*, 7.

[45] Yukon enjoys the lowest pupil-teacher ratio of any Canadian educational jurisdiction, in part because of the small school populations in rural areas. On average, there is one teacher for approximately every 10.6 students. The national average for classroom sizes in Canada is 21.3 students. See Canadian Teachers' Federation, Bernie Froese-Germain, Richhard Riel and Bob McGahey, "Class Size and Student Diversity: Two Sides of the Same Coin," *Teacher Voice*, February 8, 2012. http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Priorities/default.aspx, retrieved March 20, 2012.

[46] Office of the Auditor General, Public Schools and Advanced Education–Yukon Department of Education, http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/yuk_200901_e_32234.html, retrieved March 25, 2012.

[47] Ibid., 1. In 2009 the Auditor General reported: "The Department does not regularly analyze relevant data to identify, report, and address critical gaps in student performance." This matter has subsequently been addressed.

[48] Council of Ministers of Education, *Report on the Pan-Canadian Assessment of Mathematics, Science, and Reading*, 118-122. The PCAP report published the following bleak facts. Yukon students' mean score in mathematics is significantly lower than those of Canadian students overall. In fact, Yukon students were the third lowest scoring in 11 jurisdictions. Yukon students' mean score in science is significantly lower than that of Canadian students overall. In fact, Yukon students were the lowest scoring in 11 jurisdictions. And, Yukon students' mean score in reading is significantly lower than that of Canadian students overall. Overall, Yukon students were the third lowest scoring students in 11 jurisdictions.

[49] Yukon Native Teacher Education Program." http//www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/programs Yukon College, retrieved July 20, 2011.

[50] Statistics Canada. *Educational Portrait of Canada, Census 2006.*

[51] Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Indicators of Well-being in Canada, Learning-Adult Literacy, http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=31, retrieved March 25, 2012.

[52] Even with Yukon's good levels of credentialing, challenging problems remain with literacy. According to the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 34% of Yukoners are without literacy levels sufficient to allow them to fully participate in Yukon's development. Literacy problems are especially acute in rural areas characterized by Aboriginal populations. See: HRSDC and Statistics Canada, *Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* (Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 2005). This report was cited in Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 3.1.

[53] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, B.3.

[54] Ibid., 2.23.

[55] Department of Education, *Public Schools Branch Annual Report 2003–04* (Whitehorse: Government of Yukon, 2004), 54. www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/AR-2003-2004.pdf. Retrieved January 6, 2012.

[56] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 5.11. Allowing for three non-instructional days, there are 175 days of instruction in Yukon schools. This is 12 days shorter than British Columbia's school year, 15 days shorter than that of the Northwest Territories, and 25 days shorter than Alberta's.

[57] Applications to YNTEP Program, 2004-05 to 2011-12
SOURCE: Yukon College Data Warehouse

Year	Accepted	Not Accepted	Male	Female	First Nations	Not Identified	Total
2004-05	15	11	6	20	13	13	26
2005-06	13	12	6	22	12	16	28
2006-07	17	9	7	19	9	17	26
2007-08	11	7	2	17	5	14	19
2008-09	16	11	6	22	9	19	28
2009-10	13	9	7	13	6	16	22
2010-11	11	6	3	13	3	14	17
2011-12	12	8	3	18	10	12	22

[58] Taylor et al., *Beginning the Story*, 10 described the cohort this way: "Most students were female, many with dependents, and many with previous non-formal educational experience."

[59] Ibid., 12.

[60] We heard reports, for example, about students leaving mathematics and English courses to go on practicums. We also heard reports that students missed class time in elective subjects outside the pedagogical part of the program. Invariably, it seems, the school orientation and practicum experiences were given precedence by program coordinators over coursework. Not surprisingly, as one instructor put it, students "fell off the scale in terms of marks." We were likewise informed of other scheduling problems. In some instances third-year students had still not completed second-year practicums.

[61] YNTEP graduates who comprised the focus group for the College's 2008 thematic review described YNTEP as an "excellent program." They claimed they felt "well-prepared for the academic rigor of the program" and suggested that students who withdrew from the program did so for various reasons, not just "for academic reasons." See Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 66. Such findings stand in sharp contrast to the generally negative views expressed to us in 2011-2012. Obviously the review received input from a much larger cohort than from what was probably a small focus group in 2008 and, as this review observes, the sentiments expressed about the program were far different in character and conclusion. Notable also is the fact that most of the school people who talked to us were quite negative about YNTEP.

[62] Bosely and Reid, *Sunrise*, also point out that first among the five skills components in any training package for a First Nations audience is a component that "reinforces literacy skills, including reading, writing, math and computers (28)."

[63] YNTEP statistics provided to us indicate that, of the 121 graduates the program produced, 107 were of First Nations ancestry and that, out of the total number of graduates, 30 individuals graduated with "distinction" (over 80% average) and 26 graduated with "great distinction" (over 85% average). In other words, nearly half of all graduates are awarded degrees with "distinction." Although institutions vary in their standards for degrees with distinction, ordinarily about 5% of graduating classes in top flight colleges and universities across North America are awarded degrees with "great distinction" and the next 15% are awarded degrees with "distinction." Compared to these percentages, YNTEP's distinction awards are overly generous.

[64] Macdonald, *A Study of Those Graduates Not Teaching in Yukon Schools* concludes: "most respondents commented that YNTEP was a good program (8)." Again, this 2004 finding does not jibe well with the questionnaire results from this review. The information we have collected in 2011-2012 paints a far less favourable portrait of YNTEP. Two explanations may help explain this. First, the 2012 online questionnaire allowed people to express their views anonymously, whereas the 2004 data were obtained through 15-minute interviews in person or by phone; and, second, the 2004 data were provided by former graduates whereas members of the public or anyone else familiar with the program could respond to the 2012 questionnaire.

[65] There appeared to be very little awareness on the part of some First Nations individuals that YNTEP graduates would also be teaching non-First Nations youngsters.

[66] A undated document titled "Yukon Native Teachers Education Program Core Competencies," but likely circulated in 2011—as its contents suggest—casts some light on how program organizers see the relationship between the program's cultural component and the other teacher competencies the program aims to produce. Interestingly enough, "Traditional Yukon First Nations Values" and "Anti-racist Education" are given far greater prominence and listed before such other competency items as "Assessment," "Classroom Management," "Cognitive Development," "Cognitive and Peer Coaching," "Cooperative Learning," "Communication," "Instructional Concepts," "Instructional Skills,"

"Instructional Tactics," "Learning Styles," "Motivation," "Professionalism," "Questioning Skills," "The Brain and Learning Theory," "The Culture of a School," and "Teacher as Reflective Decision Maker." The order of things in this "core competencies" document perhaps helps explain why some teachers and members of the public wonder if "the basics" are not seen to be as important as the program's cultural and anti-racist objectives. The program's original objectives indicated nothing about anti-racist education, thus raising questions about how this objective came to be included in the program. As the document defines it: "Anti-racist education is premised on the notion that many traditional and everyday ways of engaging in "education" contribute to racial oppression in schools and society. Furthermore, many of the current reforms in education, such as multi-cultural education, trivialize inequalities and mask the oppressions that need to be challenged."

[67] See Appendix B, Formal Agreement for Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (March 1990), 9 and also details in endnote 27.

[68] A partial explanation may rest in the fact that all eight Yukon indigenous languages appear at risk of extinction today due to the demise of many fluent speakers in recent decades, the influence of mass media and globalization, the predominance of the English language, and difficulties with revitalization initiatives. Against such a backdrop, it is easy to understand why some people might look to the teacher education program and to the schools for help in preserving language and culture.

[69] We were informed that Norma Shorty is the only First Nations person who currently teaches in the program.

[70] The shortage of First Nations instructors was clearly emphasized in various documents over the years, including Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 66. It is difficult to explain why this matter has generally been overlooked.

[71] Telephone conversations with University of Regina education dean: September 28, 2011; December 9, 2011; and May 7, 2012.

[72] Ibid.

[73] The Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) was established in 1976 to facilitate access to teacher education for people in northern Saskatchewan, especially those of Aboriginal ancestry. Since this time, NORTEP has become a well-established and popular program that combines academic theory on a campus in La Ronge with practicum experiences for teacher education students in schools across northern Saskatchewan.

[74] Some growing trends in teacher education can be seen in the University of British Columbia's post-degree program starting in September 2012. The program will include a focus on research and inquiry, as well as a mandatory practicum, in a non-traditional teaching setting. These changes are intended to prepare graduates for the diversity of today's classrooms and to equip them for teaching in alternative settings. Under the new curriculum, students will complete a three-week alternative practicum where they will work as educators outside classrooms in such places as seniors' residences, art galleries, or museums. The new one-year program will also includes mandatory classes on Aboriginal perspectives, teaching English as an additional language, teaching French in elementary school, along with special education courses, and research and inquiry seminars. The coursework will emphasize themes of social and ecological justice, as well as diversity, to make teachers more aware of the social and educational challenges they will encounter. See: Heather Amos, "UBC's Teacher Education Program Gets a Makeover," Public Affairs UBC, http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2011/12/01/ubcs, retrieved March 6, 2012.

[75] The University of Regina was at a loss to explain why these oversights occurred. The reason or reasons are likely lost in the mists of time.

[76] The University of Regina's Faculty of Education has not "revised or updated" its middle school preparation program since 1991 but now appears to be making some changes to it outside the description of the program found in the university's calendar, see http://education.uregina.ca/index.php?q=ElementaryEducationPrograms.html, retrieved March 6, 2012.

[77] More than once in this review we heard complaints about the way the program was managed, both currently and in the past. One source claimed the program's problems, in part, could be traced to the disorganization that marks it and to a longstanding idiosyncratic managerial style by program administrators that makes it look as if YNTEP was "run from off the side of the desk."

[78] Taylor et al., *Beginning the Story*, 17 chronicles early organizational issues that led over time to operational confusion and the emergence of administrative and governance structures that would later bedevil the program.

[79] Similarly, other than serving as a granting agency, the education department's role seemed generally tangential to the program. Government made a political commitment to the teacher education program and left the academic side of things to others. The education department was not made responsible for teacher certification, something that would normally fall under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Under the agreement that established YNTEP, the University of Regina took care of meeting certification requirements for program graduates. The program's first executive director was in charge of the program from 1989 to 2004. From this time on, parts of the administrative supports for the program, including control of the budget, began to fall under Yukon College's jurisdiction.

[80] Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 61.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Approval for academic courses and the suitability of academic staff fell under the ambit of the University of Regina's education dean and faculty, along with the on-site director who represented the University and was in charge of administering the program.

[83] Yukon College, *Thematic Review,* 61.

[84] The Review Committee that was originally established to govern the program included: one representative from the University of Regina, Faculty of Education; one representative from the Department of Education; one representative from the Yukon Teachers' Association; one representative of the Council of Yukon Indians; and one representative from Yukon College. The committee was originally expected to meet three times a year and YNTEP's executive director served as an *ex officio* member. From what we understand, the executive director was charged with convening the Review Committee and for setting its agenda. During the program's first two years, 1989-1991, the committee met on a monthly basis in the 1989-1990 term, on four occasions during 1990-1991, and three times in 1992-1993. Attendance at one meeting (November 13, 1991) included: senior officials from the education department; a representative from the University of Regina; a representative from the Council of Yukon Indians; A YNTEP student representative; a representative from Yukon College; and the YNTEP secretary as recorder. See Taylor et al, *Beginning the Story*, 20.

In 1991, the terms of reference for the original review committee were revised and the new committee was designated the Advisory Committee. According to a number of sources, this committee met far less

frequently and no longer included the senior managers that served on the previous committee. So, too, have we learned that advisory committee meetings were far less frequent after 1991 when, it has also been reported, the advisory committee became far more influenced by the director (later the program coordinator) than in the program's first two years. Questions about oversight mechanisms in place to monitor the program, along with questions about failed attempts to review the program, were raised in legislative committee hearings. See, for example, Public Accounts Committee *Evidence*, Whitehorse, Yukon, Thursday, February 5, 2004, 3-21 to 3-28. Several sources have likewise informed us that advisory committee meetings have been infrequently held in recent years. Such infrequency brings into question the efficacy of the oversight process and suggests an evident need for a new governance structure. During the 2011-2012 year, the Advisory Committee included: a representative from the education dean's office at the University of Regina; a representative from the Yukon Department of Education; a First Nations Elder; a representative of the Council of Yukon First Nations; a representative from the Yukon Teachers' Association; a YNTEP Alumni representative; and a representative from Kwanlin Dun First Nations. The program coordinator and the dean of Applied Arts served as ex officio members.

[85] In 2011-2012, four of eight advisory committee members (non ex officio) were YNTEP graduates

[86] Taylor et al, *Beginning the Story*, 16.

[87] Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 65.

[88] Ibid.

[89] David Bell, *Sharing Our Success: Ten Case Studies in Aboriginal Schooling*. (Kelowna, B.C: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, 2004), 13.

[90] Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, *Guiding Principles for WNCP Curriculum Framework Projects* (n.p. January 2011).

[91] A May 7, 2004 letter from the education department to education dean Margaret McKinnon at the University of Regina specifies that YNTEP "will be in place for an indefinite period" and that a decision by either party to terminate the agreement "will require four years notice."

[92] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2.9. Added to this are other factors. Teacher recruitment is expensive, attrition is commonplace, and teacher transiency rates—especially in small communities—remain high. Recurring cycles of finding and replacing teachers is more than just costly in financial and managerial terms. It is even more expensive in the instructional discontinuities it creates for students. Overall, the deleterious effects associated with teacher transiency are no more apparent than in small, rural, and remote schools where teacher attrition is relatively high and student performance is relatively low when compared to urban centres.

[93] Dawn Macdonald, *Summary of Qualitative Analysis*, 5.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Taylor et al., *Beginning the Story*, 2.

[96] Yukon College, *Thematic Review*, 65.

[97] As noted earlier, many critical comments were directed toward YNTEP's initiatives in First Nations language instruction. "Few [YNTEP grads] have the language skills to foster or improve student language performance," one response to the questionnaire noted. "YNTEP grads have not participated in language classes within my community," another wrote. A former YNTEP instructor put the matter in broader perspective: "None of the students I worked with spoke any Yukon First Nations languages." For an

early discussion on the state of Yukon languages and the people capable of speaking them, see: C. J. Pettigrew, "Yukon Native Language Instructors: The Struggle for Recognition," *Women's Education des femmes*, Vol. 8. No. 1 (June 1990), 15-18.

[98] Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 2.22 wrote: "Diploma and degree courses are needed that will provide training in language instruction to First Nations learners. Language instructors and language teachers' aides would be required to take these courses. Programs would need to be designed for people with a range of fluency. Innovative approaches are needed, with supporting curriculum materials, dictionaries and grammars."

[99] Ibid., 2.21. The advantages were held to include: [The] ability to expand courses and bring related disciplines together in one administrative unit; cost-sharing to make the expansion of programs affordable; gaining support and strengthening programs; jointly recruiting and sharing faculty staff; sharing distance-education facilities and technology; gaining more authority to develop suitable courses; providing a greater range of programs with First Nations content; and sharing databases.

[100] As far back as 1993, YNTEP was informed by University of Regina researchers about problems its students were experiencing in mathematics. See Taylor et al., *Beginning the Story*, 16.

[101] Jo-ann Archibald, Victor Glickman, and Ian McKinnon, *Learning and Career Pathways: Tracking Education Career Path and Employment Status of BC Teachers of Aboriginal Ancestry* (Vancouver: Edudata Canada, 2005), 10.

[102] Under Section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* responsibility for education in Canada is ceded to individual provinces and territories. Although provincial autonomy in education matters is the rule, the 10 provincial governments, along with Yukon and Northwest Territories, signed a 1995 agreement (*The Agreement on Internal Trade*) relating to labour mobility in Canada. In January 2009, the agreement was amended to include certain professions previously excluded from the agreement because of their status as employees in regulated occupations that were certified or licensed by provincial or territorial authorities. The agreement now includes teachers.

Under the amended agreement, no jurisdiction can refuse to certify in that jurisdiction any teacher who had been certified in another jurisdiction, or impose additional academic or professional requirements upon teachers from other jurisdictions prior to certifying them in that jurisdiction. Because potential teacher candidates could move to a jurisdiction that had lower certification requirements (for example, 72 credit hours of academic preparation and 48 hours of professional preparation for a four-year Bachelor of Education degree), education programs in some universities began modifying existing programs to come into line with less-stringent requirements in other jurisdictions. Prior to the signing of the *Agreement in Internal Trade*, British Columbia, for example, was moving towards certification that would have required all elementary teachers to have a minimum five-year Bachelor of Education degree and, preferably, a four-year degree plus a two-year professional preparation program. At the University of Northern British Columbia, the teacher education program began in 1992 with a requirement that all applicants (elementary and secondary) should have an undergraduate degree in arts or sciences prior to entering the two-year Bachelor of Education program.

Earning a certificate, diploma, or degree does not necessarily confer teacher certification. In some jurisdictions, an earned Bachelor of Education degree does provide the recipient a teaching certificate, as the government assigns authority for teacher certification to the education deans in the province. In other

jurisdictions, the education deans recommend to the certification authority "individuals of good character" whom they believe should be granted a teaching certificate.

Ordinarily, after an education program has been approved by the provincial or territorial department of education, certification follows. Post-secondary authorities normally determine the entrance and exit requirements for their academic programs. At Yukon College, the YNLC determine the curricular requirements for language and culture certificates and diplomas, and Yukon College has authority to determine curricular requirements for education degrees. If someone successfully completes these requirements, a certificate, diploma, or degree is awarded. In Yukon, however, the Department of Education is the teacher certification authority that determines whether an individual applying for teacher certification meets certification requirements. In this case, the authority may establish requirements related to the education, competence, and conduct of teaching professionals that must be met by post-secondary institutions (for example, Yukon College). A person, therefore, may meet the College's requirements for a certificate, diploma, or degree (and be awarded that certificate, diploma, or degree) but could be denied teacher certification if careful planning through consultation does not occur. Each authority (Yukon College, YNLC, and the Department of Education) has agreements with other organizations and interest groups that require consultations and, perhaps, consent prior to establishment of an education program.

[103] In some programs such as YNTEP, academic and professional preparation occurs concurrently. That is to say, teacher candidates take academic and professional courses in each of the years (including practicum years) in which a teacher candidate is enrolled. Some people argue this is preferable as teacher candidates can experience teaching situations from the beginning of the program. With such an approach, however, students are generally "locked into" programs and coursework taken as part of the program may not be transferrable to other institutions, allowing that someone decides to enter another program. Likewise, teacher candidates may not receive credit for general coursework completed at Yukon College before applying for admission to YNTEP because concurrent programs are usually considered stand-alone units. That is to say, all courses in the program must be completed to earn the Bachelor of Education degree. In general, there is a single entry point into concurrent programs as these programs tend to be inflexible.

[104] Post-degree education programs may be described as "consecutive" programs where academic and professional preparation occurs consecutively. That is to say, academic preparation takes place prior to a teacher candidate enrolling in a professional program. In Ontario, for example, "over 80% of teacher candidates . . . attend consecutive education programs." See R. Crocker and D. Dibbon, *Teacher Education in Canada* (Kelowna, BC: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education [2008] cited in Shawn Michael Bullock, *Inside Teacher Education: Challenging Prior Views of Teaching and Learning* (Sense Publishers, 2011), 1. Across Canada, consecutive education programs that follow academic preparation are either one-year programs leading to a "teaching certificate" or two-year programs leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. In British Columbia, for example, a two-year professional preparation program that follows a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, or Bachelor of Science degree is considered a Bachelor of Education degree. If a two-year education program follows 90 credit hours of academic preparation, it is considered to be a component of a five-year Bachelor of Education degree. Two-year professional preparation programs range across Canada from a low of 48 credit hours to a high of ≥ 76 credit hours. According to one well-known authority, graduates of extended professional programs (two-year programs) are "more satisfied with their preparation . . . better prepared, are as effective with students as much more experienced teachers, and are more likely to enter and stay in

teaching." (See Linda Darling-Hammond, "How Teacher Education Matters," *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*, 166-173).

[105] We refrain from making any recommendations related to the curricular course content of any of the program options we suggest. Some existing YNTEP courses could easily find a place in a newly conceptualized YBEP program but, also, new courses will have to be developed to reflect changing appreciations of how children learn and what constitutes effective teaching.

[106] Generally, 300 and 400 level courses are considered senior level, but more recently, the distinction has become qualitative, based on breadth or depth of the course's content. For example, a single three credit hour literature course split into novels, short stories, poetry, and drama would likely be at the 100 or 200 level (breadth but not depth); a children's literature course, however, at the 200 level could be considered a senior level course if an analysis of the course outline suggested sufficient depth.

[107] *Education* Reform *Project: Final Report*, 2.21

[108] Office of the Registrar, *University of Northern British Columbia 2012-2013 Undergraduate Calendar.* http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/undergraduate/undergraduate_programs/education.html#elementary, retrieved April 27, 2012.

[109] Northwest Territories Education, Culture, and Employment, *Strategy for Teacher Education in the Northwest Territories: Paste Experiences and Future Directions* (Yellowknife; NWT: Northwest Territories Education, Culture, and Employment, 1998).

[110] Council of Yukon First Nations, *About YNLC* (Whitehorse, Yukon, n.d.).

[111] The NLIP has provided many First Nations language instructors for schools in Yukon and British Columbia. However, according to the *Education Reform Project,* Native language instructors have only enjoyed limited success in delivering language lessons both within a time frame that is constrained—sometimes to less than 30 minutes per day—and by vocabulary-based lessons. See Executive Committee of the Education Reform Project, *Education Reform Project Final Report*, 4.1.

[112] We can only speculate but this might involve decreasing the number of professional preparation courses and increasing the number of language and culture course within the certificate and diploma programs. The professional preparation courses (selected by YNLC and its partners from the professional preparation courses in the education program) could comprise the professional preparation component for a Language and Culture Certificate and for a Diploma program, which would, when supplemented with selected courses from the education program lead to a Standard Teaching Certificate and, thereupon, potentially lead to a Bachelor of Education degree completion program.

8. Background Information

8.1 Meetings with individuals and groups

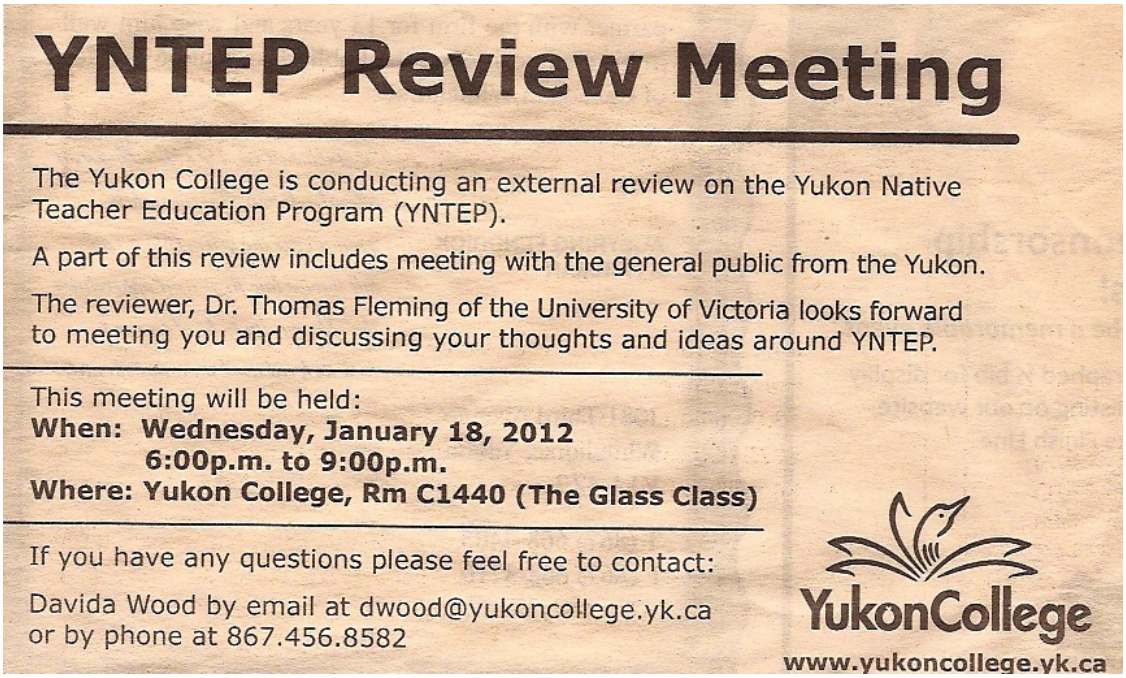
Brian Aubichon
Karen Barnes, Yukon College
Deborah Bartlette, Yukon College
Gayle Bedard, Yukon Department of Education
Andre Boucier, Yukon Native Language Centre
Jim Boyde, Yukon Department of Education
Ida Calmegane, Elder, Carcross-Tagish First Nation
Dick Chambers, Yukon Department of Education
Nita Collins, Yukon College
Lawrie Crawford
Bill Dushenko, Yukon College
Lori Eastmure, Yukon College
First Nations Programs and Partnership Unit, Department of Education
Shereen Hill, Yukon Department of Education
Melanie Heynen, Yukon College
Rick Karp, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce
Larry Kiesling, Ghuch Tla Community School, Carcross
Elizabeth LeMay, Yukon Department of Education
Dawn MacDonald, Yukon College
Katherine Mackwood, Yukon Teachers' Association
Grand Chief Ruth Massie, Council of Yukon First Nations
Shandell McCarthy, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
Janet McDonald, Yukon Department of Education
Bob McClelland, Yukon College
Katherine Mackwood, Yukon Teachers' Association
James McNinch, University of Regina
President's Advisory Committee on First Nation's Initiatives
Andrew Richardson, Yukon College
John Ritter, Yukon Native Language Centre
Shelagh Rowles, Yukon College
Ted Riecken, University of Victoria
Bil Roberts, Yukon College
Cully Robinson, Carcross-Tagish Education Office

Sharon Shadow, Yukon Department of Education
Bob Sharp, Yukon College
Norma Shorty, Yukon College
Brent Slobodin, Yukon Department of Education
Tosh Southwick, Yukon College
Dave Sloan, Yukon Department of Education
Maureen Stephens, Yukon College
Greg Storey, Yukon Department of Education
Ann Taylor, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
Tim Topper, Yukon College
Jennifer Tupper, University of Regina
Christie Whitley, Yukon Department of Education
Davida Wood, Yukon College
Mike Wood, Yukon Department of Education
John Wright, Elijah Smith Elementary School
Yukon First Nations Educational Advisory Committee
YNTEP Advisory Committee
YNTEP Bachelor of Education Students

8.2 Public meetings

Yukon College Public Meeting, December 7, 2011
Yukon College Public Meeting, December 8, 2011
Yukon College Public Meeting, January 18, 2011

8.3 Example of advertisements in Whitehorse newspapers for public meetings



YNTEP Review Meeting

The Yukon College is conducting an external review on the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP).

A part of this review includes meeting with the general public from the Yukon.

The reviewer, Dr. Thomas Fleming of the University of Victoria looks forward to meeting you and discussing your thoughts and ideas around YNTEP.

This meeting will be held:
When: Wednesday, January 18, 2012
6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.
Where: Yukon College, Rm C1440 (The Glass Class)

If you have any questions please feel free to contact:

Davida Wood by email at dwood@yukoncollege.yk.ca
or by phone at 867.456.8582

YukonCollege
www.yukoncollege.yk.ca

8.4 Media interviews

Shirley McLean, APTN Whitehorse
Roxanne Stasyszyn, *Yukon News*
Sandi Coleman, CBC Whitehorse
Yukon College News

8.5 YNTEP review website

The following information appeared on the YNTEP Review Website: Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP) is a four-year, Bachelor of Education degree delivered at Yukon College and granted by the University of Regina. Since its establishment in 1989, the program has graduated 121 students (as of 2010), 107 of whom are of First Nations heritage. Non-First Nations students were admitted to the program for the first time in 2004 on the condition that half of the available spaces were reserved for First Nations students. For further information on YNTEP's development, see http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/programs/info/yntep.

Why is the YNTEP being reviewed? Most colleges and universities conduct program reviews on a regular basis, usually every five to seven years. A program review is conducted to ensure that the

courses and practicum experiences are up to date, that skills and knowledge associated with particular degrees and programs are periodically revised to include new scholarship. As a matter of course, program reviews take into consideration: the experiences and views of current and former students; the experience and credentials of instructors; and the views and perspectives on the program held by employers, government, the general public, and partners involved in the program's delivery. Program reviews are normally conducted at arm's length by academics from outside institutions who have special experience and expertise in the area.

The YNTEP program has never been subject to an external review since its establishment more than twenty years ago. In fact, it has been six years since a small internal review of YNTEP was conducted.

Because the YNTEP program was originally created to address a grave shortage of First Nations teachers in Yukon schools, First Nations peoples are regarded as important partners with Yukon College in the delivery of this teacher education program. Accordingly, when the President's Advisory Council on First Nations Initiatives (PACFNI) at Yukon College passed a motion in autumn 2010 requesting a formal, external review of the program, the College began to search for an external review team. PACFNI is an important body that represents all 14 Yukon First Nations peoples and provides strategic advice and direction to the College.

Who is leading this review? After a search of more than six months to find suitable candidates to conduct this review, Dean Deb Bartlette announced in July 2011 that Yukon College had appointed Dr. Thomas Fleming, Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, and Dr. Colin Chasteaneuf, recently a chair of the education department at the University of Northern British Columbia. Dr. Chasteauneuf has extensive expertise in developing and delivering First Nations teacher education programs, particularly in northern contexts.

Dr. Thomas Fleming was born in Dublin, Ireland, and attended parochial and public schools in Ireland, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. He has studied at the University of Victoria, the London School of Economics, Stanford University, and the University of Oregon and holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in intellectual and diplomatic history and a Ph.D. in the history of education. He has taught at the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and served as Assistant to the President at the University of Victoria and at the University of British Columbia, as well as Executive Officer for the Council of Western Canadian University Presidents (and Vice-Presidents Academic) before becoming a faculty member at the University of Victoria.

From 1984 to 1986, he served as a program auditor for the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Canada-China Bilateral Management Education Program. In 1985, he authored the 1985 school reform initiative in British Columbia, *Let's Talk About Schools*, and, in 1987, he was appointed editor-in-chief and a research director for the British Columbia Royal Commission on Education. He was responsible for writing *A Legacy for Learners*, the commission's main report, along with editing nine volumes of the royal commission's papers. In 2000, he received the

University of Victoria Faculty of Education Inaugural Excellence in Teaching Award. In 2006, was the recipient of the Craigdarroch Research Award for Societal Service and was also made an honorary member of the Association of Canadian Studies in Argentina for his contributions to Argentine education.

Professor Fleming is well known for his co-authored volume on U.S. school management, *A History of Educational Administration in Thought and Practice*, and for his edited volume, *School Leadership: Essays on the British Columbia Experience 1872-1995*. In 2010, Professor Fleming published a two-volume history, *The Principal's Office and Beyond: Public School Leadership in British Columbia, 1849-2005*. In 2011, he published a documentary history of British Columbia schools since the mid-nineteenth century, *Schooling in British Columbia: Voices from the Past, 1849-2005*, and a monograph on the current turbulence in British Columbia education, *Worlds Apart: British Columbia Schools, Politics, and Labour Relations Before and After 1972*.

How will this review take place? Dr. Fleming and Dr. Chasteauneuf will be consulting broadly with students, educators, First Nations representatives and other Yukoners interested in YNTEP during his working visits to Whitehorse and other Yukon communities. His first visit took place in September 26-30, 2011 when he joined in a preliminary discussion about the program review with PACFNI. He returned to Whitehorse from December 5-11 where he met with YNTEP students, former students, government officials, representatives from the Yukon Teachers' Association, as well as staff from Yukon schools and members of the public. During this visit he was interviewed by ATPN and CBC North.

Dr. Fleming will come back to the Yukon from January 12-19 and if necessary will make an additional visit. Opportunities to meet with Dr. Fleming will be available during the January visit and will be publicized on this website, as well as through the local media.

Ms. Davida Wood, Coordinator, First Nations Initiatives at Yukon College, is in charge of Dr. Fleming's schedule. If you wish to meet with Dr. Fleming, please contact Ms. Wood at dwood@yukoncollege.yk.ca to make an appointment.

Progress to Date: In addition to the information collected during interviews from his first two visits, Dr. Fleming has begun to review and analyze a variety of reports and foundational documents related to YNTEP and Yukon education dating back to the 1970s. As the review moves forward, Drs. Fleming and Chasteauneuf will also review relevant program materials from Yukon College and, for comparative purposes, other academic institutions. Important data will also be gathered through interviews, survey questionnaires (see below), public and other meetings. All interviews and other data will be treated confidentially throughout the course of the review.

Dr. Chasteauneuf will begin his work in January and focus on the curricular component of the YNTEP Bachelor of Education program. In particular he will examine the content, relevancy, and sequencing of course work, as well as the "fit" of all programmatic elements in YNTEP and how

they compare to First Nations teacher education programs in other provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

What questions are we asking? Several broad questions will guide the review and consultation process. First, we would like to know what works in YNTEP and what are its strengths. Second, we would like to learn where changes or improvements could and should be made. And, third, we would like to look forward by inquiring: "If we started now to build a teacher education program to meet the needs of the Yukon in the twenty-first century, what should it look like?"

Much has changed in the Yukon and in the world since YNTEP began more than 20 years ago. We would like to learn what skills and knowledge teachers generally require today, as well as what particular skills and knowledge teachers require to be effective in all Yukon schools and communities, large and small.

How are we collecting data? In addition to public consultations, we are inviting First Nations peoples, the public, school professionals, as well as former and current YNTEP students to complete a confidential electronic survey. PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SURVEY RESPONSES COMPLETED ON THE WEBSITE ARE COLLECTED ANONYMOUSLY AND TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. PLEASE ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT ONLY ONE RESPONSE WILL BE PERMITTED FROM ANY ONE E-MAIL ADDRESS.

When will the review be completed? Drs. Fleming and Chasteauneuf expect to complete their review and present their findings and recommendations in written form to Yukon College and PACFNI in early May 2012, and with their permission, these will be posted on this website.

Contact information: If you have any questions about the review, or wish to be included in the consultation, please contact Ms. Davida Wood at dwood@yukoncollege.yk.ca. You may also send an e-mail with your views and observations on YNTEP directly to Dr. Thomas Fleming, Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria at tfleming@uvic.ca. Please include YNTEP Review in the subject heading of your e-mail.

8.6 YNTEP review survey questions

1. How well does the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education program meet the needs of First Nations peoples and Yukoners generally?

2. Do you think that the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education program is relevant to teacher candidates who may have to teach in both large and small communities?

3. Compared to teacher training programs outside of the Yukon (for example, Lethbridge, University of Alberta, UBC, and other institutions) do you think that the YNTEP Bachelor of Education program better prepares, prepares the same, or doesn't prepare as well, the future graduates of a B. Ed program?

4. Has the YNTEP Bachelor of Education Programs easier, harder, or about the same set of entrance qualifications compared to teacher-training institutions outside of the Yukon?

5. Does the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education Program offer opportunity to build capacity within rural and urban First Nations communities in the Yukon? (For example, opportunity for school and family support structures, leadership training etc.)

6. Has the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education Programs been successful in preserving Yukon First Nations languages, heritage, culture and knowledge? Has the program been very successful, somewhat successful, or not successful at all?

7. Can you compare the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education Program to other Bachelor of Education programs in Canada? What comparisons can you make?

8. What is the key function of the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education program in the Yukon?

    a. To provide education from elementary school teachers?
    b. To provide education for secondary school teachers?
    c. To provide education for both elementary and secondary school teachers?
    d. To provide education for rural teachers?
    e. To provide education for urban teachers?
    f. To provide education for both rural and urban teachers?
    g. All of the above?

9. What should the YNTEP/Bachelor of Education teachers do to prepare Yukon students for further education or employment opportunities throughout Canada and the World?

10. What two recommendations or improvements would you like the program to make? Have you any other suggestions for change?

8.7 Matters beyond the review's scope

At the beginning of this review, we noted several matters were brought to our attention that impacted on teacher education but clearly fell outside the scope of the review. They are listed here to identify them for future consideration.

Assisting the transition from teacher education to teaching: Many recommendations for change expressed in this review had to do with providing more substantial supports to assist individuals in the transition from teacher education to teaching. Overall, YNTEP graduates, along with other teachers and administrators, pointed out that support for new teachers should be strengthened, particularly in the case of teachers assigned to rural schools.

Several YNTEP graduates—and now well-experienced teachers—claimed that establishing a teaching career, especially in the first three years, along with tasks of lesson planning, volunteering, coaching, as well as extra-curricular responsibilities, leads to burnout for some teachers. Because of the difficulties teachers face in "getting a career started," a good number of people we spoke with recommended moving toward an extended "ease of entry" into full employment, particularly for teachers beginning careers in rural and small elementary schools where they may be obliged to provide instruction in multiple grades.

Others suggested to us that the current mentoring program offered by the Yukon Teachers' Association should be extended to allow support for new teachers employed in temporary positions. Currently, only teachers classified as "permanent department hires" qualify for such assistance. Still others advised that introducing a mentorship program for new teachers for periods of six to 12 months might provide an easier transition, certainly if it was augmented by side-by-side coaching for some graduates. Experienced teachers generally agreed that students graduating from a teacher education program "really don't know how difficult it is going to be" and suggested that a period of substitute teaching for one or two years might also help ease new teachers into the profession.

A 2004 Yukon College study of YNTEP graduates questioned whether the "sink or swim" approach in placing new teachers was really the best approach. Much more, the study reported, could be done by a teacher education program to assist new teachers:

> [T]he program could do more to help students through the school-to-work transition. There could also be more cooperation and communication with the outside stakeholders—schools, teachers, superintendents and principals, and the community at large. Students sometimes feel that they are just "thrown out there" after graduation, when they still need mentoring and assistance. One respondent, who was mentored "discreetly" by other teachers at the school where she had worked, remarked, 'That's what made that year so successful for me. I was able to rise up and do the job.'

Providing supports for new teachers in rural schools was also a much-discussed topic. Virtually everyone who spoke to us during this review observed that the challenges of rural schooling requires teachers with considerable craft knowledge, personality, empathy, cultural understanding, sensitivity, an ability to assess specific community problems, and an ability to deal with them both creatively and diplomatically. Some survey respondents and people we interviewed went as far as advising "do not assign new teachers to rural schools until they have had three or four years experience in other classrooms." More than once were we reminded "where teachers are placed is the key to their success," along with the caution that teachers ill-prepared for the difficulties of rural schools generally serve as "lightening rods" for school and community problems.

The 2007 *Education Reform Project Final Report* provided us with useful background information about student teacher placement, and teacher retention, in rural schools. Creating more rural "lab-schools," the report advised, would allow several students the opportunity for a simultaneous practicum experience where they could support each other and learn to solve problems together. The report also suggested that teacher accommodation shortages in small communities required consideration, along with revisions to housing and travel subsidies for student teachers. Increasing the number of rural placements for student teachers, the report concluded, will encourage graduating students to seek out jobs in rural schools.

No doubt teacher education programs should also invest more time preparing First Nations students and graduates in how to find employment, notably in developing interview skills and learning about school district organization and hiring practices.

Publicizing education's importance in rural communities: As one experienced principal observed, there continues to be "a great distance between some First Nations families and the schools," a disconnection due in large part to the troubled history between First Nations peoples and authorities in residential and mission schools. Consequently, it remains an uphill struggle at times for educators to convince First Nations people that schooling really matters and that teaching is a valuable profession.[112] Many people who spoke to us pointed to the value of publicizing education's importance, particularly in rural communities. Such promotion could greatly help raise the stature of teaching as a career.

Teacher education could also be promoted as a highly accessible way for First Nations communities to enhance their human capital. Good teacher preparation programs have "spillover" effects. They bestow many useful kinds of knowledge and skills that lend themselves to application in various organizational situations. These certainly would include the organizing and managing skills necessary to address some difficult issues Yukon First Nations are facing in governance, land and community administration, agreement implementation, and in preserving cultural assets.

Increasing the number of First Nations administrators: Calls to increase the number of First Nations secondary teachers through new program options were also accompanied by calls to

increase the number of First Nations administrators in Yukon schools. About this point, the *Education Reform Project Final Report*, observed: "The number of First Nations teachers and instructional staff in Yukon schools have grown since the inception of YNTEP [but] graduates from the program are nearly absent from upper administrative positions within the Yukon school system." When the *Education Reform Project Final Report* was published in 2007, only three First Nations principals were serving in Yukon schools—one of them was a YNTEP graduate. Two YNTEP graduates at this time were also serving as vice-principals. The *Education Reform Project Final Report* summed up the situation plainly: "The Yukon needs more First Nations teachers and administrators in its schools. It is time for a truly representative public school system that reflects those whom it serves and for the curriculum to reflect the cultures and world views of Yukon First Nations people."