

HUMA 5105

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Constructing Citizenship: Literacy, Labour, and Lessons on the Frontier

Abstract

In 2012 I took up a placement with Frontier College as part of my graduate study at Laurentian University in Northeastern Ontario. This paper has developed as a critical reflection and interpretation of my role as a volunteer tutor for ten weeks. In this paper I argue that true to its title, the College's model of educational culture literally designates a "frontier"—physically, philosophically, and performatively. After discussing the significance of the "frontier," I explain how my interpretation of the College benefits from readings of Foucault's studies of discipline, punishment, and civilization. I use several examples of Foucault's concepts, methods, and arguments to examine three stories that the College constructs through the normalizing activities of the College tutor. These three stories elaborate upon the theme of the frontier and they project the texture of dialogue, partnership, and social justice in context.