



*Brian D. McInnes 2015–16 Distinguished Teacher  
Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award*

As a teacher of American Indian education, Brian McInnes has seen many students walk in with no intention of changing their worldview. But he has seen barely any walk away without having acquired an increased respect for Indigenous peoples.

“Several times throughout his course, I heard people whisper, ‘Wow! I have never thought of it like that before,’” says a former student. “Dr. McInnes inspires us to look into ourselves and not only identify misperceptions, but seek to correct them.”

Growing up in a society that did its best to force Indian children to assimilate, McInnes has dedicated his life to preserving the Ojibwe language and culture, and to teaching others how to carry on the work. At UMD he founded the Enweyang Ojibwe Language Immersion Nest as

a comprehensive preschool offering a variety of subjects, all taught through the Ojibwe language.

He has led the way in transforming mainstream teacher education courses to Indigenous contexts. For six years McInnes was the principal investigator for the Minnesota Indigenous Youth Freedom Project, which served at-risk American Indian youth from urban and rural areas.

He is also noted for his leadership in the K-12 Teaching World Languages education program.

“His courses have a real connection to our community traditions and what our Anishinaabe elders say is important to know in all aspects of life,” writes one student. “This is what makes his teaching so enjoyable and meaningful to students at UMD.” ❧

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*“Helping our students learn the truth and consequences of our shared history is vital to understanding current circumstances. An even greater outcome is when students become ... allies in the quest for positive critical change and social justice.”*

