

August 11, 2009

Dr. Penney Clark  
Director, THEN/HiER  
Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Faculty of Education  
University of British Columbia  
2125 Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4

Dear Penney,

Please find enclosed with this letter a brief report documenting the outcomes of my THEN/HiER Small Grants Project, **Support of an Alberta-based Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Working Group**.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank THEN/HiER for the Small Grants initiative. Without it, I would not have been able to complete the project described below in a timely or efficient manner. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Carla Peck, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Social Studies Education

**Final Report: THEN/HiER Small Grants Program**  
**Support of an Alberta-based Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Working Group**  
**Carla Peck**  
**University of Alberta**  
**June – August 2009**

In March 2009, THEN/HiER funds were secured to hire a graduate student to assist with editing teacher-generated Benchmarks of Historical Thinking lesson plans and posting them to [www.historybenchmarks.ca](http://www.historybenchmarks.ca).

The work consisted of:

- ensuring historical thinking concepts are at the heart of the lessons
- ensuring the lessons follow the required format
- providing additional instructions or guidance within the lesson plans, as needed
- ensuring all external links and attachments contained within lesson plans are functional
- finding and selecting additional resources to support lesson plans
- ensuring copyright has not been infringed
- ensuring student work is posted in an accessible format and, of course,
- communicating with the teacher-authors to ensure that the lesson plans remain consistent with their initial intentions.

In total, eighteen lesson plans, including support materials, were extensively edited for content and consistency. Some of the topics addressed in the lesson plans include: *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, The Great Depression, Imperialism, Transportation, Confederation, Immigration and Residential Schools.

Once edited, the tasks were sent to Jill Colyer, National Coordinator of the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Project, who is in the process of reviewing them for consistency with other tasks on the site and, finally, posting the Alberta-based lesson plans to the public side of the Benchmarks website.

This project refined my thinking on a number of ideas related to teacher professional development. Moving forward into a second year of the Benchmarks Project in Alberta, I will:

- Have teachers submit rough drafts of their lesson plans early in the project.
- Ensure teachers are explicit about teaching the concepts in their lesson plans (as opposed to simply referring to them).
- Create a checklist of items to include in each lesson and have teachers hand in checklist with their lesson.
- Ask teachers to supply evidence (explain) that their lesson plans reflect the historical thinking concept(s) under study.
- Standardize attachment file names, for example: “BLM #1-Title.” This needs to correspond to the citation in the text.
- Encourage teachers to focus on only one or two historical thinking concepts, rather than trying to address a few and then doing so superficially.