

Final Report

“History, Identity and Diversity in the Secondary School Social Studies Classroom”: A History Teaching Conference

Organizers: Jennifer Pettit and Scott Murray, Mount Royal University

Summary

“History, Identity and Diversity in the Secondary School Social Studies Classroom,” a one-day History Teaching Conference held in conjunction with the Calgary City Teachers’ Convention on 18 February, 2011 and generously sponsored by THEN/HiER, was a great success. All of the planned events for the day – i.e., the keynote address by Prof. Carla Peck, the eight sessions led by MRU faculty over the course of the day, Charlene Hellson’s closing session entitled “Unpacking the Backpack,” lunch, coffee, etc. were very well received, and vigorous and enlightening discussions regarding the many aspects of junior high and high school history teaching took place over the course of the day. An exit survey conducted at the end of the event indicated that the attendees were unanimous in their approval of the day’s activities, and strongly support the prospect of this becoming an annual event.

Our principal goals were to:

- establish meaningful contact between secondary and post-secondary history teachers in the Calgary area, and to see what we can learn from one another
- strengthen how history is taught at both the secondary and post-secondary levels in Calgary
- forge closer ties with The History Education Network.

Schedule

9-10am	Carla Peck— History, Identity and Diversity in the Social Studies Classroom
10:15-11:15 (3 concurrent sessions)	Mark Humphries Using Decision Making Exercises in the Social Studies Classroom Lianne Leddy Acknowledging and Incorporating Indigenous Worldviews in the Classroom David Clemis Understanding our Futures through our Pasts: Seeing Human Possibilities through Historical Study

11:30-12:30 (3 concurrent sessions)	Kori Street Relevance and Resistance - Holocaust Survivor Testimony Scott Murray Whose citizenship, whose identity? Exploring the Limits of Diversity in the Social Studies Classroom Shawn England History Textbook Controversies: A North American Perspective
12:30-1:30	LUNCH
1:45-2:45 (2 concurrent sessions)	Jennifer Pettit Using Interactive Technology and Inquiry Based Learning in the Social Studies Classroom: The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project Sean Kheraj Building Digital History Skills
3:00-4:00	Special Presentation entitled “Unpacking the Backpack” by Charlene Hellson

The number of attendees was approximately 60, the majority of whom were Social Studies teachers in the Calgary system. We also had a number of Education students from Mount Royal University in attendance, as well as MRU faculty and student volunteers. While this was less than the number of attendees we aimed for, the smaller numbers permitted us to ensure that the day’s events went smoothly and helped facilitate greater participation by all of the attendees at the individual sessions.

Looking Forward

Given the very positive responses from candidates when they filled out the exit surveys, Mount Royal University plans to host a similar event next year and we hope that ties continued to be forged between History teachers at the various levels. The funds THEN/HiER provided have thus helped lay the basis for what we hope to be a rewarding and fruitful partnership between elementary/secondary and post-secondary History teachers in Calgary and the event made everyone aware of the services provided by THEN/HiER. We also hope to expand the role played by students in future events. In particular, the Education students indicated that the event was of great use to them and their future careers as History educators.

Expenses

The funding we received allowed us to fund an excellent presentation by Charlene Hellson which examined the impact that historical and political events have had on Canada's First Nations, her family and her life. In addition, THEN/HiER funding paid for a gift card draw for participants who filled out an exit survey, and for supplies for packages for program participants.

In addition to funding from THEN/HiER, the event was also sponsored by the Office of the Vice President Academic at Mount Royal University, the Arts Scholarly Events Council at Mount Royal University, and the Calgary City Teachers' Convention Association.

In conclusion, organizers Scott Murray and Jennifer Pettit and the History faculty at Mount Royal University sincerely thank THEN/HiER for providing support for this worthwhile endeavour.