



Signal Hill National Historic Site of Canada. © Parks Canada

What Is THEN|HiER?

The History Education Network/Histoire et Éducation en Réseau (THEN/HiER) is the first pan-Canadian organization devoted to promoting—and improving—history teaching and learning by bringing together the multiple and varied constituencies involved in history education: academic historians; public historians in museums, archives and historic sites; practicing teachers; researchers based in faculties of education; and curriculum policy makers. Our goal is to create more research-informed practice (from kindergarten to graduate school) and more practice-informed research through dialogue among these various communities. THEN/HiER was conceived in 2005, but became firmly established in April 2008, when it received funding from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Strategic Knowledge Clusters grant.

Director

Penney Clark, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia

Executive Board

Jennifer Bonnell, Ph.D., Graduate Student Coordinator
Margaret Conrad, Professor and CRC, University of New Brunswick
Anne Marie Goodfellow, Ph.D., Network Manager
Viviane Gosselin, Doctoral Candidate, UBC
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Ruth Sandwell, Associate Professor, OISE/University of Toronto
Peter Seixas, Professor and CRC, University of British Columbia
Amy von Heyking, Associate Professor, University of Lethbridge

Welcome to the third issue of The History Education Network / Histoire et Éducation en Réseau's (THEN/HiER) bi-annual Newsletter. We are very excited about the year ahead, and the possibilities it brings for collaboration among the diverse constituencies involved in history education in Canada.

Inuit string game
Richard Harrington
National Archives of Canada / PA-114713

What Has THEN/HiER Been Doing Lately?



Playing with Technology in History

This upcoming THEN/HiER symposium coordinated by Executive Board member **Kevin Kee** with the theme of technology and how it relates to history takes place April 29 to 30 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. On the first day of this “unconference” participants will be building/using and being playful with technologies in history. On the second day participants will critique papers for an edited volume. A blog has been set up at playingwithhistory.com as a conversation space to create a sustainable community. It is not exclusive to the symposium but contains information about symposium participants as a starting point for discussion. Some of the participants are Brenda Trofanenko, Acadia University; Bill Turkel, University of Western Ontario; Bethany Nowvickie, University of Virginia; John Lutz, University of Victoria; and Mills Kelly, George Mason University.



THEN/HiER Presentation

Alan Sears, Professor of Social Studies Education at University of New Brunswick and THEN/HiER member, made a presentation to faculty members in the departments of History, and Classics and Ancient History, at UNB on the topic of Current Research and



Development Initiatives in History Education. In his talk he discussed the work that THEN/HiER is doing to promote dialogue among different constituencies involved in history education.

Another speaker, **Theodore Christou**, Assistant Professor in UNB's Faculty of Education, described the teaching of the History of Education in terms of historical mindedness, disposition and outlook, and skills required for effective history teaching. Some possibilities arising from the meeting for future initiatives at UNB included a joint course in the teaching and learning of history, a co-sponsored teachers' institute on the teaching of history in New Brunswick for the summer of 2011, and developing a 'historians in the schools' program.



THEN/HiER Event

In the Toronto area THEN/HiER has partnered with Active History to sponsor a quarterly series of events that will bring together historians, educators, and public history professionals. "Approaching the Past: A Series Connecting People Teaching History" will create opportunities for discussion between these groups through a series of events, including talks by history educators, walking tours, and group discussions.

The first event will be held at Black Creek Pioneer Village Wednesday, June 16th from 7-9pm. Professor **Ruth Sandwell**, THEN/HiER Executive Board member, will be speaking on the subject of teaching nineteenth-century rural history. All are welcome. Please RSVP to Jennifer Bonnell at jenniferlbonnell@gmail.com by May 18, 2010.



Executive Board Member Activities

Viviane Gosselin, Doctoral Candidate at the University of British Columbia, presented her current research in the Museum Studies Department, Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto on February 22 to a diverse group of graduate students, museum scholars and professionals. She was also invited to discuss the relationship between public and academic historians in a public history seminar in the History Department at UBC on March 29. She completed the co-editing of *National Museums*, to be published by Routledge in September in collaboration with the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, UK. On April 12, she gave a brief presentation about THEN/HiER at the "Training Museum Educators" symposium sponsored by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Lower Mainland Museum Educators. And last week, she presented results of her dissertation research at "Taking Stock: Museums and Museum Practices in Canada," a conference at the University of Toronto. Details of this research are in THEN/HiER's January 2010 e-Bulletin.

Jennifer Bonnell, THEN/HiER Graduate Student Coordinator, has successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, "Imagined Futures and Unintended Consequences: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don River Valley" at OISE/University of Toronto. Congratulations to Jennifer!

Penney Clark, THEN/HiER Director, is continuing her SSHRC funded historical research concerning the production and provision of elementary-high school textbooks in Canada. In three recently published articles, she explored the questions: How have three dominant stakeholders – departments of education, publishers, and booksellers – positioned themselves in the conflicts which have arisen over textbook production and provision? Which publishing companies have controlled textbook production and what strategies have they used to maintain that control? The articles are “A Natural Outcome of Free Schools’: The Free Text-Book Branch in British Columbia, 1908-1949,” in *Historical Studies in Education* (2009) (with graduate student Yesman Post); “Great Chorus of Protest’: A Case Study of Conflict Over the 1909 Eaton’s Readers,” in *History of Education Journal* (UK) (2009); and “Reckless Extravagance and Utter Incompetence’: George Ross and the Toronto Textbook Ring, 1883-1907,” in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* (2008). She is currently exploring the role of regional textbook



publishing and multinational firms in the context of post-war textbook publishing and English-Canadian identity.

Lord Tennyson Elementary School, Vancouver 1923
City of Vancouver Archives Photograph # CVA 273-4



Small Projects Grants

Charles Hou of the Begbie Contest Society was awarded a Small Projects Grant to search for primary sources dealing with essay topics based in Atlantic Canada for future Begbie contests. Topics presently under consideration include the seal hunt, the sinking of the Titanic, tidal power, the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation, the razing of Africville, and the failure of the cod fishery.

News from Our Partners

Benchmarks of Historical Thinking National Meeting February 18–20, 2010, Toronto

Jill Colyer, Benchmarks Coordinator

At our second national meeting, “A Big Step Forward: Historical Thinking in Provincial Curricula, Assessments and Professional Development,” we hosted instructional leaders, teachers, leading history education scholars, and representatives from ministries of education from almost every province and territory as well as publishers, representatives from Parks Canada, Canada’s History, Library and Archives Canada, and heads of a number of provincial teaching associations. We received excellent feedback on the Benchmarks Project along with clear direction for a number of new initiatives for the next year. A post-conference report is in the works, and we are also in the process of adding new lessons and assessment tasks to our new website at www.historybenchmarks.ca.



Ontario History and Social Science Teachers’ Association and Association for Canadian Studies

OHASSTA is partnering with ACS for their biennial conference on “The Teaching and Learning of History,” to be held November 5 and 6 in Toronto. In March there was a conference pre-forum in Ottawa to consider some themes and possible plenary sessions. Speakers included Jan Haskings-Winner, President of OHASSTA; Kim Wallace, Education Officer at the Ontario Ministry of Education; Renée Brouillette, Education Officer at the Ontario Ministry of Education and part of Direction des politiques et programmes d’éducation en langue française; and Ian Pettigrew, President of the Ontario History, Humanities and Social Sciences Consultants’ Association (OHHSSCA). Other sessions included updates from organizations related to history education such as the Historica-Dominion Institute (Andrew Cohen), Benchmarks of Historical Thinking (Jill Colyer), THEN/HiER (Penney Clark), Parks Canada (Larry Ostola), and Canada’s History (Joel Ralph).

News from Our Partners

Museums Association of Saskatchewan

Jessica Leavens of MAS, a THEN/HiER partner, and **Jennifer Forsyth** of the Alberta Museums Association, co-presented a paper titled *Learning with Provincial Museums Associations: Exploring Community-based Museum Studies at "Taking Stock: Museum Studies and Museum Practices in Canada."* Their talk examined the history and position of education, training, and professional development programs offered through provincial museums associations. It also addressed the programs' roles and audiences as well as their impact on the museum community. Using their own associations as case studies, they explained the relationship between museum studies and professional museum practice, focusing on the role of museum practitioners. They also examined the range of programming designed to meet the divergent needs and priorities of museum practitioners as both peer educators and educational resources throughout Canada.

Museums are dynamic places that attract employees and volunteers from various walks of life who have diverse skill sets, job histories and educational backgrounds. Because of this diversity not all museum professionals desire traditional academic training, but seek a different type of engagement in their careers. Jessica and Jennifer hope their research on the relationship between museum studies and practice will assist both theorists and practitioners develop a greater understanding of the historical, cultural, and social context through which the complex field of museum studies in Canada has developed and continues to mature.

Parks Canada – New Plan

Experiences editor

We've revamped our look ... and our plan! From now on, new content for *Experiences* will be posted as it becomes available and you'll be notified of new articles as soon as they're 'live'. We hope you enjoy the new strategy and the improved archiving system. Here's the latest reading for you to enjoy:

Highlight of 2009: Nahanni Expansion!

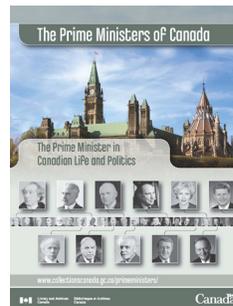
Hidden Marine Treasures

Costumes Bring History to Life

Recognizing Diversity in Our Country's Past

Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²)

Colleen Andjelic of TC² is author of the five critical challenges in Library and Archives Canada's



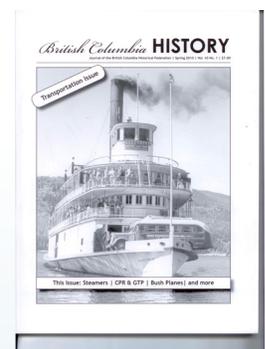
new resource *Prime Ministers Kit*.

The challenges are geared towards grade 9 to 12 students (Secondary cycles 1 and 2 in Québec) in Canadian history, social studies, civics, or other Canadian studies courses.

British Columbia Historical Federation

Penney Clark, THEN/HiER Director, will be the guest editor for a special issue of *British Columbia History* devoted to education. The issue will be published in 2011. Dr. Clark will speak at the BC Historical Federation Annual General Meeting which will be held in conjunction with the Federation's Annual Conference, "It's All About Transportation" in Vancouver May 6 to 9, 2010.

Spring 2010 Issue of
British Columbia History



Graduate Student Corner

Pour les étudiants francophones aux cycles supérieurs ...

Jennifer Bonnell

THEN/HiER Graduate Coordinator

Join THEN/HiER graduate student committee members in conversations about current issues in history education within the THEN/HiER discussion forum. You can also access this dialogue on Facebook or follow our posts on Twitter. Comment on a recent development in your region, submit a news item or an upcoming event, advertise for co-panelists for an upcoming conference, or draw THEN/HiER members' attention to an issue of relevance to history educators. In the coming months, committee members will be creating a podcast series on the THEN/HiER website profiling the work of history education scholars and exemplary history teachers in Canada.



To build connections between graduate students with an interest in history education in different parts of the country, we will also be launching the following initiatives through the 2010/11 year:

- 1) a master list of recommended readings in history education for comprehensive exams;
- 2) a virtual writing group; and
- 3) a workshop for graduate students in history, education, and public history programs focused around a key theme in history education.

We welcome involvement by graduate students in history, education, and public history programs (among others). To share ideas and for further information about related opportunities for graduate students, please contact me at jenniferbonnell@gmail.com. Also visit the Graduate Student Corner section of our website. While you're there, don't forget to sign on as a member.

Of special interest to francophone graduate students: There is a new section of the THEN/HiER website for francophone students coordinated by **Catherine Duquette** of Université Laval and **Sabrina Moisan** of Université de Montréal, Pour les étudiants francophones aux cycles supérieurs.



Catherine Duquette

Their mandate is to bring together francophone graduate students in programs related to history education (for example education, history, museum studies, etc.) and to make

them aware of the advantages of involvement with THEN/HiER. To accomplish this they will be organizing events, discussions, and workshops, among other things, that involve items of interest to various public partners (museums, history societies, etc.). They are also resource people for students who wish to obtain more information about or have ideas for events. You can contact them at thenhier.francophonie@gmail.com.



Sabrina Moisan

Also of interest to francophone graduate students is that THEN/HiER will translate abstracts of works published in French and include them in our comprehensive Abstracts and Summaries database on our website. If you have published an article in French about history education, or have a publication in the process of review, consider submitting your abstract to THEN/HiER to bring your research to a wider audience.

Research Snapshots



Network Manager **Anne Marie Goodfellow** conducted an interview with Executive Board Member **Stéphane Lévesque** to learn more about a grant he received to further his research on “Learning by Playing,” described in our March 2010 *e-Bulletin*. This is an excerpt of the interview. The complete transcript is available on our website under Research Snapshots.

Congratulations on being awarded a Canadian Foundation for Innovation grant for over \$500,000 to build The Virtual History Lab© at University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Education. I understand that this is the largest grant that has been awarded at the University of Ottawa in areas other than science and medicine. Can you talk a little bit about this, and the implications for research in the humanities and social sciences?

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation provides funding for acquiring major infrastructure and covering operation costs to conduct cutting-edge research in various fields of study. While science and medicine have been the lead beneficiaries of the program, notably because of the high costs associated with their technologies, domains such as history education are now recognized as strategic to Canadian research and a knowledge-based society – and for good reasons. For today’s students, ICT plays an integral part in their learning experience. The Virtual History Lab will be the first infrastructure to conduct scientific research on computer-user behaviours in history. Using such technology as eye-tracking and audio-video recording systems, it will become possible to monitor and study in real-time situations how computer users (classroom students, museum visitors, online archivists, etc.) engage with digital sources and computer applications.



Please explain what this lab will consist of and what kinds of testing you will be doing in it and with whom.

Virtual history is the study and use of the past with digital technologies. From preserving and sharing family photographs on social networks to searching online databases, to visiting virtual exhibits or playing history simulations, 21st century students are engaged in a plethora of activities about the past using technology. Traditional studies on computer-users’ interactions are exploratory in nature and focus on pre-test and post-test experiment, retrospective self-assessment and questionnaires, and quantitative data analysis on web access and click-through. While these methods are still valid, they do not offer complex, authentic assessment in the digital world. In order to know more accurately what computer users pay (or do not pay) attention to, how they engage with virtual history objects and ultimately what they learn from such engagements, it is necessary to track and analyze learning behaviours in situ – that is in real-time learning situations.

Can you please describe your research in this area and its findings in some detail?

For the last five years, I have been researching how history students learn with technology. With a grant from the Western Innovation Fund, we developed an online learning program called the Virtual Historian© (www.virtualhistorian.ca). The VH was used in a number of exploratory and experimental studies, financed by the Canadian Council on Learning and SSHRC, to assess the role and impact of such technology on students’ history learning and literacy. Consistent with other studies in Canada and abroad, the findings reveal the potential but also limits of technology in delivering content and promoting historical and digital literacy competencies. On the one hand, our studies offer empirical evidence that using an online learning program to teach history can significantly increase students’ interest, their understanding of the subject matter, their ability to write historically and their critical thinking about the past. On the other hand, however, technology in its current form is no panacea. Many students with advanced computer skills have limited competencies – and patience – with complex digital history tasks. Our studies with Canadian schools suggest further research in the field.



Where can our readers learn more about this approach to history education? Please provide some references to published materials in this area, either by yourself or other researchers.

Although there is a growing interest and investment in virtual history in Canada and abroad, there is surprisingly a dearth of relevant resources and studies in this emerging field. Even in the US, where technology is at a cutting edge, studies and publications in history and technology remain marginal. Scholars publish in journals such as *Text Technology*; *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication*; *Computers in Human Behavior*; *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*; *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*; *Journal of the American Association for History and Computing*; and the *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*. More specifically, research communications in virtual reality and eye-tracking are presented in conferences such as the “Eye Tracking Research and Application Symposium,” the “America Association of History and Computing Annual Meeting,” and the “Society of Digital Humanities/ Société pour l’étude des médias interactifs Annual Meeting.” A number of blogs and websites are also dedicated to the subject, including Digital History Hacks and the Virginia Center for Digital History. The VH Lab will pay careful attention to digital history learning and behaviours across age groups and linguistic communities and offer a new research platform for students, scholars, and partners in the field.

Is there something you’d like to share about history education?

THEN/HiER’s *Newsletter* comes out bi-annually, in April and October. We also have a monthly *e-Bulletin* to keep you up to date on the latest news in history education. If you have something you would like to share with others involved in history education, please contact the Network Manager, Anne Marie Goodfellow, at annemarie.goodfellow@ubc.ca.

For more information about THEN/HiER, please visit our website at www.thenhier.ca, or contact the Network Manager.