

*Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.*

## What's new with THEN/HiER?



Katie Gemmell, Penney Clark, and Heather McGregor (l-r)

\* **Heather McGregor and Katie Gemmell, THEN/HiER members**, have been awarded prizes from the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education (CAFE) for their graduate research. Heather's doctoral dissertation, *Decolonizing the Nunavut School System: Stories in a River of Time* (Supervisors, Penney Clark and Peter Seixas; Committee member, Michael Marker), and Katie's Master's thesis, *The Impact of Progressive Education on Roman Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Vancouver: 1924-1960* (Supervisor, Penney Clark; Committee members, Jason Ellis and Mona Gleason), were recognized as Outstanding Dissertation and Outstanding Master's Thesis.

## THEN/HiER Annual Regional Conference

On June 4 and 5, THEN/HiER held its fifth Annual Regional Conference in Ottawa. *Finding Franklin: New Approaches to Teaching Canadian History* featured speakers from the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History (GUMICH), the Nunavut Department of Education (NDE), Parks Canada, and the Centre for Oral History at Concordia University. Its focus was on new approaches to teaching and learning history through curriculum materials and a new GUMICH website developed around the search for the missing Franklin ships (described in further detail in our Partner section on page 2).



Plates recovered by Parks Canada from the HMS Erebus, part of the Franklin expedition.



Penney Clark, Vincent Boutonnet and Stéphane Lévesque, Award Committee Chair (l-r)

## Reception at Congress

THEN/HiER co-hosted a reception in Ottawa on June 3 at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences with the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education (CAFE) and the Educational Research Unit (ERU), University of Ottawa. Vincent Boutonnet, recipient of THEN/HiER's 2014 Publication Prize, officially received his award at the reception. [Read more.](#)

## Graduate Student Project Program

Cynthia Wallace-Casey, University of New Brunswick, recently completed a Graduate Student Project titled *De-constructing Cabinets of Curiosity: An Arts-based Inquiry Project*. The project demonstrated how a heritage community can assist students to deepen their historical consciousness.

## Approaching the Past - Vancouver

The final *Approaching the Past* event of the season, "History of Baseball in Vancouver," was held June 17 at Nat Bailey Stadium. Kit Krieger, Society for American Baseball Research; Tom Hawthorn, newspaper and magazine writer; and Josh Coward, Executive Director of the Nikkei Place Foundation, provided informative talks on Vancouver baseball history. After the talks, Kit gave a tour of the Bud Kerr Baseball Museum, located inside the stadium. Participants enjoyed hot dogs and burgers.



Josh Coward

## Feature Blog



By Iwona Erskine-Kellie from Vancouver, Canada (St. Michael's Residential School Building) [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

This month bloggers on *Teaching the Past* commented on a wide range of topics. While all of the blogs are excellent (and you should give them a read if you have not already), Sean Carleton's post, *British Columbia's Contact Zone Classrooms, 1849-1925*, is particularly interesting. Sean discusses his doctoral research, which examines the role of schooling, particularly public schooling, in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands in British Columbia. The article is a major contribution to the ongoing discussion of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## What's new with our partners?

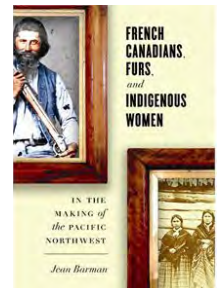
\* **Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History (GUMICH)** launched its new website, *The Franklin Mystery: Life and Death in the Arctic* at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa on June 4. The website is GUMICH's latest installment in its web based series devoted to posing historical mysteries and providing primary documents and support materials for students and teachers in order to teach historical methods, as well as Canadian history content.



\* **The Museum of Vancouver (MOV)**, in partnership with the Musqueam First Nation, the University of Waterloo, and the **UBC Museum of Anthropology**, another THEN/HiER partner, has received the Public History Prize from the **Canadian Historical Association's (CHA)** Canadian Committee on Public History for *c'esna?em: the city before the city*, a multi-site exhibition project about the history of Musqueam society in what is now the city of Vancouver. More information.



\* **The Canadian Historical Association (CHA)** has awarded the 2015 Governor General's History Award for Scholarly Research to Jean Barman for *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest* (UBC Press, 2014). Read more.



## Graduate Student Committees



Scott Pollock

This month was, yet again, very busy for many Anglophone Graduate Student Committee members. Several attended THEN/HiER's *Finding Franklin* symposium, which Rose Fine-Meyer has described in detail in two posts (Day One and Day Two) on our blog *Teaching the Past*. Chris Pedersen also contributed the third part in his series on historical distance and history education. Congratulations should also be given to Cynthia Wallace-Casey who successfully completed her doctoral defence. Way to go Cynthia! Contact Scott Pollock.

On June 3 several members of both THEN/HiER Graduate Student Committees participated on a panel titled "Why Should History Education Research Matter to Historians?" at the Canadian Historical Association conference in Ottawa. We congratulate them and thank everyone who came to the presentations. As you read on page one, THEN/HiER held a symposium on June 4 and 5 on the Franklin expedition at which some of our members participated and greatly appreciated the diverse activities that were included. Of particular interest were the Inuit stories and reflections on the rich oral tradition of Inuit communities. Deadlines for several fall conferences are coming up, so we suggest that you check the Francophone Graduate Student Committee webpage for up-to-date information. For example, the Association québécoise pour l'enseignement en univers social (AQEUS) will hold its annual conference jointly with a THEN/HiER partner, the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS), on October 22 and 23. To submit a workshop proposal or to register, please visit the association's website. Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.

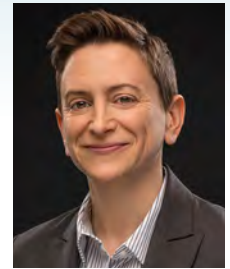


Marie-Hélène Brunet

## Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

**Abby Reisman**  
Assistant Professor of Teacher Education  
Graduate School of Education  
University of Pennsylvania



### Designing Opportunities for Text-Based Historical Discussions

What does it take to transform the history classroom into a place marked by student exploration and discussion about the past?

For over a decade, I have worked with colleagues at the Stanford History Education Group to generate a set of concrete pedagogical and curricular tools that translate the lofty rhetoric of inquiry instruction into actual classroom practice. Most of these tools now appear in the *Reading Like a Historian* curriculum, a series of document-based lessons centered on legitimate, historical questions.

All of the *Reading Like a Historian* Document-Based Lessons share certain features that open history up to interpretation. They all include historical sources that have been modified for struggling readers, as well as multiple opportunities for students to engage in the skills of disciplinary historical reading: sourcing, contextualization, close reading, and corroboration. Each lesson is designed around a central historical question that points students to the documentary record. Results from a six-month intervention study in San Francisco high schools found that students in *Reading Like a Historian* classrooms outperformed their counterparts in reading comprehension, historical thinking, factual recall, and general reasoning.

The Document-Based Lessons also have a predictable sequence of classroom activities. Students begin by reviewing background information relevant to the inquiry, and then spend the bulk of the class reading and interpreting the documents. The lessons are intentionally designed to culminate with a whole-class discussion, where students offer and reconcile competing responses to the central historical question.



A text-based history discussion in a 6th grade classroom in Virginia

Yet, in my analysis of videotaped instruction, I was struck by the near absence of whole-class discussion, despite the explicit call for discussion in the curricular materials. In a recent article, "Entering the Historical Problem Space: Whole-class Text-based Discussion in History Class" (*Teachers College Record* 117, no. 2 [2015]: 1-44), I discuss the difficulties that teachers encountered in attempting to facilitate text-based discussion about the past, and I identify facilitation moves that might promote student argumentation and reasoning with texts. I found that in productive discussions, the teacher raised specific questions about the text, revoiced students' comments to make explicit the structure of the argument, and stabilized the historical content to ground the discussion in accurate claims about the past.

This past year, I ran a study that explored how best to coach teachers in facilitating text-based whole-class discussion in history. I worked with four middle-school teachers over the course of the school year, observing their instruction, and offering targeted feedback on discussion facilitation. Although I am only in the earliest stages of data analysis, two important themes seem to be emerging: first, it is nearly impossible to give substantive feedback on discussion facilitation without attending to the curricular resources themselves and the historical understanding that they aim to elicit; second, teachers who view discussion as emerging spontaneously from students – as they, for example, make personal connections to the topic at hand – are less likely to perceive their own agency as facilitators who design opportunities for discussion. In other words, it appears that supporting teacher facilitation of text-based discussion is not as simple as sharing a list of discursive moves or providing access to curricular materials that scaffold historical interpretation. It appears that teachers must also see themselves as designers of opportunities for discussion and student interaction.

**\* MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**