

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

What's new with THEN/HiER?

*** Playing with Technology in History**

This THEN/HiER symposium held on April 29 and 30 in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario organized by Executive Board Member **Kevin Kee** was a great success! The purpose of this “unconference” was to explore using technology in history education. Comments from some of the participants include: “I spent a fair amount of time wondering how all the ‘play’ we talked about can be connected to the serious purposes of teaching and learning about the past. ... At a minimum, however, it seems to me that if historians are willing to be a little more playful, we are more likely to engage a wider audience for our work” (**Mills Kelly**, Associate Professor, Department of History and Art History and Associate Director, Center for History and New Media at George Mason University); and, “the particular combination of playful openness and then focused productive work was really appealing and invigorating. Best of both worlds” (**Josh Greenberg**, Director of Digital Strategy and Scholarship, New York Public Library).



Mills Kelly

*** Website Update**

Doctoral students **Mary Chaktsiris** (Queen's University), **Samantha Cutrara** (York University), and **Lindsay Gibson** (University of British Columbia) have been busy developing materials related to history education for our website. Mary has been summarizing recent theses and dissertations; Samantha has been writing abstracts of journal articles and book chapters; and Lindsay is in the process of organizing a repertory of primary sources around topics in Canadian history to aid teachers who are looking for classroom resources.

*** Small Projects Grants**

The Richmond Delta Museum Society held its 8th Heritage Fair from April 30 to May 2 with help from THEN/HiER's Small Projects Grants program. The Heritage Fair is a bilingual educational initiative to encourage students to explore Canadian history and heritage in a hands-on learning environment. Students presented their research to a panel of adjudicators and participated in history-related field trips and activities. Tom Morton, a THEN/HiER member, gave a workshop to students on historical thinking.



Tom Morton



Read the final project report and a description of Tom Morton's workshop.

The one-day “**Reaching a Popular Audience Workshop**” held at the University of British Columbia was pronounced a success by the organizers and, based on the feedback received, by the participants as well. Graduate students from across Western Canada were given the chance to participate and we are hopeful that the skills they learned will lead the students to become life-long contributors to popular media. THEN/HiER provided funding for travel and food. Read the final project report.

*** Visiting Doctoral Student Program**

Meagan Gough, a doctoral student at University of Saskatchewan, successfully completed her doctoral visit at the University of the Fraser Valley with Dr. Robert Anderson. She explored the topic, “Gaining Cross Disciplinary Experience in the Related Fields of Indigenous History, Anthropology, and Oral History.” Read the final report.



Canning sockeye salmon with Archie Charles and his granddaughter at his fishcamp near Yale BC, July 2009

*** Cliffs and Chasms: The Landscape of History Education Research in Canada**

This collection (with the former working title *History Teaching and Learning in Canada: The State of the Art*) written by scholars in the field of history education and edited by **Penney Clark**, THEN/HiER director, has been accepted for publication by UBC Press, with an anticipated publication date of summer 2011. Contributors explore and articulate the landscape of history education research and implications for practice at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

What's new with our partners?

* **Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness**

Registration is still open for the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Summer Institute from July 5 to 10 at Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. The Institute will use the methodological core of Benchmarks concepts such as *primary source evidence*, *historical significance*, and *continuity and change* for curriculum, lesson, and exhibit design and development. THEN/HiER will bring scholars from across Canada to present the latest research on history education and the best of contemporary school practices. More information and registration.



THEN/HiER will provide bursaries of up to \$2,500 to the following people to attend the Institute:

Alan Corbiere, Executive Director, Ojibway Cultural Foundation (a THEN/HiER partner)

Shannon Hodge, Archivist, Jewish Public Library Archives, Montréal

Robert Jardine, President, Saskatchewan Council of Social Sciences (a THEN/HiER partner), and teacher at Blaine Lake Composite School

Janet Thompson, teacher at Gladstone Secondary School, Vancouver

Brent Toles, Social Sciences Consultant, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

Robyn Young, teacher at Villanova Junior High, Newfoundland

* **Nova Scotia Social Studies Teachers' Association Provincial Conference**

This theme of this year's conference is *Understanding Each Other*. The conference will be held on Friday, October 22, 2010, at Lockview High School, in Fall River, Halifax County. THEN/HiER is planning a workshop session for the conference. See the call for presenters.

* **Canadian Museums Association**

The CMA will be partnering with The Rooms - Provincial Museum Division of St. John's, and the Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANL), to offer two 2010 CMA/RBC Internships for emerging young professionals in the museum field, such as recent museum studies or arts administration graduates. Read more.



Graduate Student Corner

Graduate student coordinator **Jennifer Bonnell** has been involved with a number of initiatives in recent weeks. These include:

1) a **national conference for graduate students** to be held in conjunction with the joint *Association for Canadian Studies/Ontario History and Social Science Teachers' Association* annual meeting in Toronto in early November 2010. More details about this conference will be available in the next edition of the *e-Bulletin*.

2) a new initiative on the THEN/HiER website called "**Spotlight on Graduate Student Research**." Each "spotlight" will feature a brief introduction to the research of graduate students working on issues related to history education from across the country. Audio clips from interviews will accompany a brief research summary, and links to related articles, websites, or other materials that the student has developed. Keep an eye on the Graduate Student Corner for upcoming features.

3) an **interview series** with scholars and practitioners working on diverse topics related to history education. Members of the graduate student committee will be conducting interviews with leaders in history education in Canada over the summer months. Check out the podcasts section of the THEN/HiER site in the coming months for featured interviews.

Francophone graduate student coordinators **Sabrina Moisan** and **Cate Duquette** have been making connections with students and professors in History Didactics programs across Québec. At a meeting at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal on May 14 to introduce graduate students to THEN/HiER and its resources, they developed a proposal to hold a workshop in conjunction with the upcoming *l'Association québécoise pour l'enseignement en univers social* (AQEUS) conference in October 2010, on the subject of the use of information technology to teach history.

Le coin des étudiants des cycles supérieurs.

Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects. If you would like to submit a snapshot of your research, please contact annemarie.goodfellow@ubc.ca.

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Research in Practice: Doing History at Fox Creek School

Dr. Susan Nobes, Principal of Fox Creek School in Fox Creek, Alberta invited me to be "Historian in Residence" at her school over a two day period in the fall of 2009. Dr. Nobes ordered artifact kits from the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta (one on the Métis, one on the Fur Trade, and one on the Blackfoot) and I brought with me a kit full of Inuit artifacts from the University of Alberta library as well as some old toys I'd picked up from an antique store in Edmonton. I planned lessons and developed "data collection charts" that I hoped would be appropriate for elementary school children to learn how to think historically.

What is Historical Thinking?

For decades, historical understanding has been thought of primarily in terms of factual recall. That is, how much could students remember (or forget) from their encounters with history in school or elsewhere? But recall does not tell us anything about our (or our students') capacity to think historically.

The unique nature of the discipline was also an important consideration from a pedagogical standpoint. The argument that pedagogical methods could be designed without considering what was being taught did not hold up under close scrutiny. In fact, the opposite was (and is) true. History education researchers then and now feel strongly that content and pedagogy cannot be separated because historical knowledge develops most successfully by doing history – or using the discipline's (or historian's) tools to construct historical knowledge.

Educators and researchers that work in the area of historical understanding have outlined several concepts that underpin the discipline, concepts that are different than the substance of history (such as "revolution" or "World War II") and instead provide a framework for investigating the past. These include *evidence*, *historical significance*, *continuity and change*, *cause and consequence*, *historical perspective taking*, and the *ethical dimension of history*. For the past four years, I have been involved in a pan-Canadian project called Benchmarks of Historical Thinking and these concepts have proven to be very effective in helping both teachers and students better understand the nature of historical inquiry.

Classroom Activities

For the younger students (grades 1 to 2), I brought different types of toys to class and had them look for "clues" to figure out which toys were from "Long Ago" and which were from "Today." With the older students (grades 3 to 6), I used artifacts from the Glenbow Museum and University of Alberta to ascertain questions one can ask about an artifact in order to gain insight into the person, people and/or society that may have used/created the object. With all students, I ended each class by asking a question that would connect the particular to the general: What can we learn about [boys and girls from long ago, the Inuit, the Métis, the fur trade, etc.] by examining these toys/artifacts? By so doing, I was able to help students make some generalizations based on the evidence they'd collected about the group/time period under study.

Concluding Remarks

Historical understanding is not only about learning to think like an historian. It is also about how we use historical knowledge to understand how things used to be, why things are the way they are now, and to decide what shape we want our future to hold. If my experience at Fox Creek School is any indication, students are waiting and wanting to be engaged in active historical inquiry that challenges them to reshape their understandings of the past. An "historical thinking" approach that employs evidence and artifacts enables teachers to meet this challenge, and places learning squarely in students' hands.

The full text of this article will appear in *One World*, the Alberta Teachers' Association's Social Studies Council journal, in fall 2010.

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**