

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

What's new with THEN/HiER?

*** Congratulations to Stéphane Lévesque, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member!**



Dr. Stéphane Lévesque has been awarded a Canadian Foundation for Innovation grant in the amount of \$201,000 to build The Virtual History Lab at University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education. This grant will be matched by the Ontario government, bringing the total grant to \$402,000. Read about Dr. Lévesque's research in our *Research Snapshots* section.



*** Visiting Doctoral Student Program**

Two doctoral students have been awarded this year's Visiting Doctoral Student Program funding, both of whom will be studying with Dr. Peter Seixas, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member, at the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, UBC.

Alexandre Lanoix is researching the relationship between history education and the development of a Québec national identity in light of the new Québec history courses that began in 2007. Alexandre is studying under Dr. Marc-André Éthier at Université de Montréal.

Cynthia Wallace-Casey is exploring how middle school students draw personal meaning from the past through their interplay with individual, social and cultural spheres of learning. Cynthia is studying under Dr. Alan Sears at the University of New Brunswick.

*** Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Summer Institute and Bursaries**

It's not too late to sign up for this Institute this summer! Registration for the Institute in Ottawa closes on April 1. The six-day program is aimed at history curriculum leaders, history teachers, and educators in history museums and historic sites from across Canada. Assignments will involve using historical thinking concepts to design active, hands-on learning experiences for students and/or museum visitors. [Click here for more information.](#)



THEN/HiER is offering bursaries of up to \$2,500 to cover travel and accommodation costs to attend the Institute. The deadline for applications has been extended to March 31. [Click here for more information about the bursaries.](#)

*** Executive Board Member Viviane Gosselin is on the Steering Committee for the UBC MEd in Curriculum and Pedagogy: Focus on Museum Education**



This exciting new Master's program in Museum Education will be offered in Vancouver and Haida Gwaii. The two-year, part time program begins in September 2010 and will bring together classroom teachers, museum educators, community resource people, and scholars to explore ways to develop teaching and learning strategies that go beyond the classroom. Application deadline is March 31. [Click here for more details.](#)

*** THEN/HiER is now on Facebook and Twitter!**

THEN/HiER is now on these two popular social networking sites, so become a THEN/HiER fan on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter. And get blogging on our website!

To see what's new with some of THEN/HiER's partners, see page 2.

What's new with our partners?

*** Museums Association of Saskatchewan**

MAS is offering several professional development workshops for museum personnel. Click on the links to learn more.

- Certificate in Community Museum Studies Program
- The Coaching Program
- Community Trainers
- Special Interest Groups
- Special Interest Program
- Standards for Boards
- Network Knowledge Exchange
- The Art of Grant-Writing
- The Museums and Sustainability Initiative



*** Canadian Historical Association's Comment on New Directions for Library and Archives Canada - The Winds of Digital "Modernization"**

"The Canadian Historical Association has always maintained a keen interest in the policies and practices of Library and Archives Canada (and its two predecessors, the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada). In recent years, it has been acutely aware of new strategic directions at LAC, and has tried to voice the concerns of its members about the implications of those changes. The current re-thinking underway within LAC's senior administration makes us deeply uneasy." More details here.

Participate in a THEN/HiER forum topic on a specific issue related to Library and Archives Canada's decision to digitize its collections:

"Lest We Forget" History Education: Canadians Call on LAC to Reverse Controversial Decision

*** Ontario History and Social Science Teachers' Association Heritage Fairs Award**

OHASSTA will be conferring awards at the Ontario Heritage Fairs for student work based on the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking concepts, using the following criteria:



- The project must have a Canadian theme and interpret various aspects of Canadian history on a local, provincial, national or international level.
- The project must provide evidence that the student has thought critically about one of the following on their chosen theme: historical significance, primary and secondary sources, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective or moral judgment.
- Students must demonstrate enthusiasm for and reflection on the topic.

Graduate Student Corner

Graduate Coordinator Jennifer Bonnell, PhD candidate, OISE/University of Toronto



Join other graduate students in history, education, and public history programs (among others) in conversations about current issues in history education within the THEN/HiER web forums and 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. For francophone students we will shortly have a section devoted to issues within "la francophonie."



To share ideas and for further information about related opportunities for graduate students, please contact me at jenniferlbonnell@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.

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.

STÉPHANE LÉVESQUE
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
THEN/HIER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER



Learning by Playing: Can digital history improve students' learning?

For today's students, computer technology plays an integral part in their learning experiences. Students are digital natives and savvy. No longer does it suffice for a history teacher to present an overhead and have students take notes. No longer is it enough for a museum to count on traditional exhibits to attract visitors. Digital history applications, whether they are virtual exhibits or online learning programs, transcend the traditional textbook and provide users with dynamic animations and authentic sources and experiences. They engage learners, their multiple intelligences and their diverse learning styles, differently. But do students really prefer computer learning? What evidence do we have that students learn better from digital history?

Few studies have scientifically documented computer-user behaviours, particularly in history education. Much of what is available comes from international/US studies which present descriptive results of small-scale investigations with online applications and webquests. Building on several years of research innovation in virtual history, Stéphane Lévesque is engaged actively in researching how Canadian students learn from and can improve their learning experience with digital history environments.

In a recent funded study by the Canadian Council on Learning (2007-2008), Professor Lévesque investigated the role and impact of a digital history program, The Virtual Historian®, on students' historical learning and literacy. What this study suggests is that digital history – with all its animated objects and dynamic scaffolds – is not a substitute for classroom teaching. Paradox? Not really. Many students continue to demand and believe in student-teacher interaction and instruction – and for sound reasons. It would be illusory to place the future and faith of history education in the hands of technology alone. Learning is far too complex and multifaceted to be reduced to serious gaming and web animations.

Still, digital history provides students with important learning tools, resources and thought processes that 21st century teachers can no longer ignore. This is why Professor Lévesque is currently engaged with colleague Adam Friedman, from Wake Forest University in North Carolina, in a comparative Canada-US study of high school student learning with technology. Looking at how comparable history subjects, such as Canada-US relations and the War of 1812, can be taught with digital technology, this SSHRC-funded research aims to uncover the particular ways in which Canadian and American teachers and students can learn in technology-connected settings.

Read a more detailed report of the study's findings.

Contact Stéphane Lévesque.

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**