

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



What's new with THEN/HiER?



Margaret Conrad
Photo: Mike Latschislaw,
University of Manitoba

* **Margaret Conrad** received an Honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) degree on October 16, 2013, from the University of Manitoba. The citation begins: "Historians possess a quiet and immeasurable power: they preserve our stories, stories that define a nation, a gender, a region and its peoples, or all. To re-evaluate facts, to reimagine history, takes a visionary rebel and Dr. Margaret Conrad is an example of one." Read the full citation.

* **Peter Seixas** spoke at the *International Seminar on Historical Culture and History Education*, December 4 to 6, which took place outside of Madrid, Spain in the Magalia Palace. His paper explored the differences and intersections between "historical thinking" and "historical consciousness" (highlighting the work of Cate Duquette), and will appear as a chapter in a handbook from the conference published by Oxford University Press and edited by Mario Carretero, Maria Grever and Stefan Berger, conference organizers.



Magalia Palace

Small Projects Grants

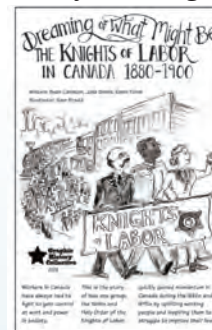
THEN/HiER has recently awarded three Small Projects Grants:

UNDERSTANDING ATROCITIES Remembering, Representing, and Teaching Genocide

- Scott Murray of the Department of Humanities at Mount Royal University will provide travel bursaries for five graduate students to attend a conference the department is hosting from February 19 to 21, 2014, titled *Understanding Atrocities: Remembering, Representing and Teaching Genocide*. The students will write about their experience at the conference on our *Teaching the Past* blog.

- David Scott, teacher at Calgary Science School and PhD candidate at the University of Calgary, is developing a digital resource guide for practicing and pre-service teachers titled *Discipline-Based Inquiry in the Alberta Social Studies Classroom*.

- Sean Carleton, Julia Smith, Sam Bradd and Robin Folvik of the Graphic History Collective, through its *Graphic History Project*, will develop graphic histories of resistance that illuminate the various ways peoples from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences have fought for economic and social justice around the world.



What's new with our partners?



* **The Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (CSHC)** has announced that the Historical Thinking Project will come to an end March 31, 2014. A blog post on our *Teaching the Past* blog by Peter Seixas, HTP Director, *A Matter of Time*, describes the project's vision and accomplishments. Heather McGregor, doctoral candidate at UBC, has written *History Education in Canada without Historical Thinking? A Worrisome Prospect* in response to this.

* **The Glenbow Museum** is hosting an Alberta Museums Association (AMA) workshop titled *Care of Artifacts in Aboriginal Cultural Centres* on February 20 and 21, 2014. The workshop covers how various types of materials deteriorate, minimizing this deterioration, identifying problems of storage and display of various kinds of artifacts, and making informed choices relating to the long-term preservation of collections.

* **The Association for Canadian Studies' (ACS)** theme issue for Summer 2014 is *History of Montréal*. The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2014.

* **The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²)** has posted *Powering Up to Critical Thinking* by Jacqueline Victoor and Cindy Hopley on its website. The two teachers from École Meridian Heights School in Stony Plain, Alberta, describe how they have implemented several promising strategies for using critical thinking in the classroom.



Graduate Student Committees



Kate Zankowicz

December has featured some fabulous posts by the Anglophone Graduate Student Committee's *Teaching the Past* blog contributors. This month's theme was *Using Biographies and Family Histories in the History Classroom*. A post by Maddie Knickerbocker, SFU, centres around using family histories in history lessons to uncover histories of colonialism and migration. Heather MacGregor, UBC, has written a post about using family artifacts as a means of motivating students to uncover their own pasts which has generated some useful entry points for creating space in the classroom for personal engagements with history. Finally, Mary Chaktsiris, Queen's University, will be posting mini-lectures about Toronto during World War I as an online *Approaching the Past* event on February 26, 2014. Stay tuned! Contact Kate Zankowicz.

December was a month for reflecting on the Francophone Graduate Student Committee's accomplishments of 2013 and preparations for 2014. We already know that a *Parlons Histoire (Let's Talk History)* event will be taking place for a second year at the Université de Montréal thanks to sessional lecturer Alexandre Lanoix. We invite you to go to the online review *Histoire engagée* that has a special issue on history teaching. You can already read an article that I wrote on the presence of women in the current history curriculum in Québec, and consult the *Actualité en débat (News in Debate)* section that offers a series of short commentaries related to the current MELS (Québec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports) public consultation on national history. Article submissions for this special issue are also welcome. On our blog *Enseigner l'histoire*, you can continue to follow Université du Québec à Chicoutimi graduate student Marc-André Lauzon's school year this month, and we also suggest that you read an article by Vincent Boutonnet, Assistant Professor at the Université du Québec en Outaouais, who attempted a fascinating pedagogical experiment using film in the history classroom. Happy holidays to all! Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

Research Snapshots

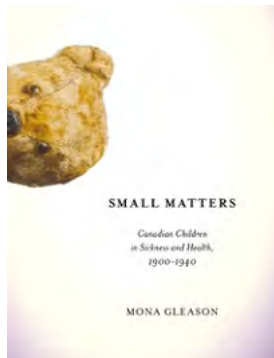
This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

Mona Gleason, Professor
Department of Educational Studies
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The Power of Empathetic Engagement: History Education and the History of Children and Childhood

Unlike many other specialized areas under the umbrella of social history, the history of children and childhood has an audience that can readily identify with it. After all, no matter who we are (or how old we are), we were all youngsters once upon a time. Drawing from my recent book, *Small Matters: Canadian Children in Sickness and Health, 1900 to 1940* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), I suggest in this research snapshot how empathetic engagement with my primary field, the history of children, can enhance history education for both educators and learners. In relation to historical understanding, empathetic engagement signals a deep connection with the experiences of people in the past. This kind of engagement offers a powerful opportunity for educators and students to see themselves in the past and to contemplate, perhaps in new ways, why and how change over time matters.



Empathetic engagement with people and events is a powerful way to draw learners into history education. Dedicated educators are constantly on the lookout for ways to make history "come alive" for their students. Likewise, learners are drawn to historical material

that is relevant and "speaks to them." When we identify with what we are learning, investing emotionally and intellectually in it, we immediately recognize its significance and are more likely to value it. This is at the core of the empathetic advantage that accompanies learning about the history of children and childhood. Our own memories of growing up, becoming social beings, going to school, forging friendships, and enduring hardships, connects us with those in the past in an incredibly intimate way. Older students readily remember how they felt when their parents, teachers, or caregivers disciplined them, what their favourite childhood toy meant to them, the pain of being teased at school, or the joy associated with family holidays and traditions. Younger children are in the middle of these important social and cultural events in their lives and have immediate insight into how they contribute to their sense of self and place in the world. Stories of growing up, comprising both positive and negative experiences, connect us with children in the past and with each other. The importance of oral history to the production of histories of children and childhood also enables students to learn about the challenges and opportunities associated with this method.

A common dimension of childhood, learning about good health habits and dealing with illness, provides a ready-made pathway into this complicated yet revealing relationship with memory and history. In *Small Matters*, oral histories of women and men who grew up across Canada contribute a myriad of stories about what they learned (and didn't learn) about health in schools and at home. Many families, for example, dealt with the common affliction of head lice by pouring kerosene on children's heads and leaving it on for hours. The treatment, while effective against lice, left children with irritated and painful scalps. Once treated, children would return to school, often encountering ridicule and bullying for being considered "dirty." This kind of history demonstrates why contemporary educators work hard to deliver the message that head lice is not an indicator of lack of cleanliness and that bullying has a long and infamous history!

Other children suffered through conditions that are common and readily treated today, like earaches, for which effective treatments simply did not yet exist in the past. In an era before the general acceptance of vaccination, children who contracted serious illnesses, such as meningitis, small pox, chicken pox, and whooping cough, often died or spent months, even years, in hospital. In a chapter in *Small Matters* devoted to the experience of hospitalization, adults tell very poignant stories of the extreme loneliness they felt as children during their time in care. Medical thinking prior to the early 1960s held that hospitalized children should be sequestered to prevent additional family members from becoming ill. Doctors and nurses also reasoned that seeing parents would only make things worse when the visit had to inevitably end.

Oral histories that give voice to diverse racial and class backgrounds, including those that shed light on gendered norms in the past, highlight important themes of inclusion, exclusion, power dynamics, resiliency, and prejudice in the history of children. The experiences of non-white children, including First Nation peoples, and those labeled as disabled, are front and centre in *Small Matters* and help students explore the past as a contested terrain, even for the youngest of Canadians. Through the power of empathetic engagement, students of all ages readily connect with these memories. Many have their own experiences of illness, loneliness, and resiliency to draw upon and are readily inclined to probe deeper into why and how attitudes towards children, their capacities and their needs, have changed over time. By embracing these and other advantages of empathetic engagement with a youthful past, educators and learners can experience a history that has the potential to truly speak to them.



Happy Holidays, everyone!