

## Final Report

### **“Perspectives, Past and Present, in the Social Studies Classroom”: A History Teaching Conference**

*Mount Royal University  
February 16, 2012*



*Mount Royal University*

**Organizers:** Dr. Scott Murray and Dr. Jennifer Pettit, Mount Royal University

#### **Summary:**

“Perspectives, Past and Present, in the Social Studies Classroom” was held at Mount Royal University (MRU) on February 16, 2012. Building upon the success of the conference held in 2011, this is the second annual event hosted by MRU in conjunction with the Calgary City Teachers’ Convention. The one-day History teaching conference was a resounding success, attracting seventy-five participants, the majority of whom were elementary, junior and high school Social Studies teachers from Calgary. Education students from MRU and the University of Calgary also attended, as did MRU faculty and student volunteers.

The event succeeded in meeting its principal goals:

- Enhance how History is taught at the secondary and post secondary level
- Promote The History Education Network—three information items distributed and THEN/HiER was discussed
- Strengthen ties between secondary (and, to a lesser extent, elementary) and post secondary teachers in Calgary
- Promote historical consciousness as a key outcome of the Social Studies program in Alberta, and in turn better prepare students for the advanced study of history at the post-secondary level

**Keynote Address and Closing Session:**

The day began with a keynote address by Amy von Heyking, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge. Professor von Heyking delivered an engaging presentation on historical empathy that examined the extent to which students can understand and identify with people in the past. The presentation also recommended various strategies that could be used to teach history from multiple viewpoints. This topic was well-suited to teachers in Calgary as the Alberta Social Studies program emphasizes teaching from "multiple perspectives."



*Professor Amy von Heyking Delivers the Keynote Address*

The closing session, delivered by John Picard, Principal, and Elia Gindin, Teacher, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, South Middle School in Calgary, addressed the challenges faced by competing ideas and pendulum swings in Education. Specifically, the application of "Historical Thinking Concepts" to Social Studies programs was explored.



*Elia Gindin, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, delivers the closing address*

The rest of the day consisted of nine concurrent sessions delivered by faculty members from Mount Royal University. This year professors from a variety of areas presented, including faculty members from the disciplines of History, Canadian Studies, General Education and Indigenous Studies.



*Audience Members at Perspectives, Past & Present at MRU*

### Detailed Schedule:

Time	Presenter/Title of Presentation
9-10am	Keynote Address by Amy von Heyking
10:15-11:15 (3 concurrent sessions)	<p>Prof. Liam Haggarty <b><i>Indigenising History: Seeing the Past from Multiple Cultural Perspectives</i></b></p> <p>Prof. Kirk Niergarth <b><i>Reinventing Canada in the 1960s: A Group-work Strategy for Teaching Divisive Issues in Canadian History</i></b></p> <p>Prof. Glen Ryland <b><i>Stories that Matter: Exploring the Role of Stories and Myths in Past and Present Conflicts</i></b></p>

11:30-12:30 (3 concurrent sessions)	Prof. Jarett Henderson <b>From “Raw Materials” to “Vivid Pictures” of the Past: Using Primary Sources in the Classroom</b>  Prof. Joe Anderson <b>Technological Determinism in the Social Studies Classroom</b>  Prof. Roberta Lexier <i><b>Social Activism and Social Change: Using Social Studies to Encourage Active Citizenship</b></i>
12:30-1:15	Lunch
1:30-2:30 (2 concurrent sessions)	Prof. Allan Dwyer <b>Canadian History through Personal Genealogy</b>  Prof. Shawn England <b>Canadian History within a Hemispheric Perspective</b>  Prof. Emily Hutchison <b>Blood, Battlefields and Beyond: Bringing Ancient and Medieval History Alive in the Classroom</b>
2:45-4:00	John Picard, Principal, and Elia Gindin, Teacher, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, South Middle School <b>Balanced Curriculum: Applying “Historical Thinking Concepts” as an Example of the Synergy between Direct Instruction and Critical Thinking</b>

### **Response and Future Events:**

To gauge the success of the event, evaluation cards were distributed to participants. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and many commented on the benefits of having secondary and post secondary teachers interact, as well as how much they enjoyed the various sessions. Particularly, teachers enjoyed receiving take-home materials that they could immediately implement in their classrooms. As a result, Mount Royal University intends to hold similar events in the future. Future possibilities include widening the audience to include teachers from charter institutions and the Catholic Board, and holding the event in cooperation with the regional unit of the Alberta Social Studies Council, rather than the Teacher's Convention.

In conclusion, we sincerely wish to thank THEN/HiER for their generous contribution which helped make this event a success.