

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

What's new with THEN/HiER?



*** THEN/HiER's Museums as Sites of Historical Consciousness Unconference, organized by Viviane Gosselin, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, was a great success! The purpose of this event, held April 11 and 12 at the Museum of Vancouver, was to workshop chapters for the fourth edited collection in THEN/HiER's book series. Contributors include practitioners and academics from a range of disciplines who consider historical literacy and the formation of historical consciousness within various museum and heritage site settings. Other members of the museum community from Vancouver and across the country participated and provided feedback to contributors.



Viviane Gosselin

*** Jan Haskings-Winner, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, was part of a panel at the Beyond Testimony and Trauma conference, March 22-25 at Concordia University, titled "The Ethics of Learning from Rwandan Survivor Communities: Critical Reflexivity and the Politics of Knowledge Production in Genocide Education." Other panel members were Lisa Taylor (Bishop's University), Sollange Umwali (Central Neighbourhood House), Marie-Jolie Rwigema (University of Toronto), Natacha Nsabimana (Columbia University), Shelly Kyte (Toronto District School Board), and Tracy Tham (Toronto District School Board).



Jan Haskings-Winner

*** Carla Peck, THEN/HiER member**, and co-editor of *Canadian Social Studies* (CSS) with Kent den Heyer, is pleased to announce that the latest issue of this online journal is now available. This issue is dedicated to the memory of Otilia Chareka of St. Francis Xavier University, who died under tragic circumstances last year, and includes an article written by Dr. Chareka with Joseph Nyemah and Angellar Manguvo, originally published by CSS in Spring 2010.



Carla Peck



Kent den Heyer



Normal School, Toronto, 1910
Courtesy of Toronto Public Library

*** *Approaching the Past*.** The board for this Toronto-based series held its last meeting for the year on April 19 at OISE/UT to finalize the last event of the year which will be held on Wednesday May 9. *Historical Landscapes and Hauntings: Connecting place to the history and social studies curriculum* is a spring walk around the University of Toronto campus and will include talks by Helen Mills from Lost Rivers, Richard Fiennes-Clinton from Muddy York Walking Tours, and University of Toronto graduate student and instructor Rose Fine-Meyer.

What's new with our partners?



* **The Ontario History and Social Sciences Teachers' Association (OHASSTA)** is pleased to announce that its publication *Rapport* is now available online! View the most recent issue, and sign up to receive future issues by email.

* **The spring edition of the British Columbia Social Studies Teachers' Association newsletter, *Dimensions***, is now available online. It includes information about the BCSSTA's upcoming conference in October, *Rights and Responsibilities: Acting Locally, Thinking Globally*, with keynote speakers Romeo Dallaire and Peter Seixas, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member.



* **The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21's *Diversity Spotlight*** encourages cultural groups to screen films at the Museum that tell their story and celebrate immigration, diversity, cultural heritage and identity. *Diversity Spotlight* provides an opportunity for community groups to encourage discussion and reflection, allowing the public to develop a broader understanding of the experiences of different people and different cultures.



Canadian Museum of
Immigration at Pier 21
Musée canadien de
l'immigration du Quai 21
Canada

Graduate Student Committees

Have you been following The Anglophone Graduate Student Committee's *Read Review Respond* blog series for the new edited collection *New Possibilities for the Past*? Katherine Ireland, Samantha Cutrara, and Cynthia Wallace-Casey have published three great blog posts reviewing and responding to lasting questions that *New Possibilities* inspires. Our final blog post published this month gives a chance for the three reviewers to ask each other questions about their review/response, creating a dialogue that challenges as well as inspires. Visit *Teaching the Past* and look for this image to flag the posts in this blog series. Also visit our blog for a guest post by Alison Deplonty who questions "Where's the History?" on History Television, as well as new posts from our regular contributors on what it takes to think historically about the world around us. If you are interested in blogging for us as either a guest blogger or a regular contributor, email Samantha Cutrara for how you can get involved. Visit our webpage to hear about other opportunities and events of interest to graduate students. Contact Samantha Cutrara or Rose Fine-Meyer.



Rose Fine-Meyer



Samantha Cutrara



During the month of April the Francophone Graduate Student Committee has been focussing on THEN/HiER's Regional Annual Conference, which will be held October 25 in Quebec City in conjunction with the International Didactics of History, Geography and Citizenship Education Symposium. The following items are in the preparation stage: determining the theme, reserving space, and contacting potential participants. We appreciate the help of our members in the Quebec City region who have been instrumental in coordinating these future activities. You should also read the latest posting on our blog *Enseigner l'histoire* by Chantal Rivard who discusses teaching history in the context of special education classes; her everyday contact as a teacher in such classrooms brings a personal touch to her article. Since the student strike in Quebec has affected each committee member in a different way (e.g., having to retake courses), we have decided to postpone our meeting in Trois-Rivières until the beginning of May. So we will have more details about that in the next *e-Bulletin*! Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

Research Snapshots

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

Peter Seixas, Professor
Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, UBC
Director, Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness

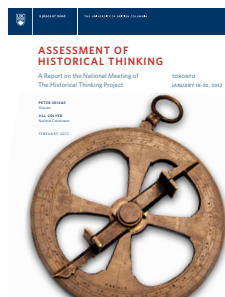


Assessing Historical Thinking

Google has radically transformed our relationship to information in general and to little bits of factual information in particular. The assessment of high school history learning, which for a century has valued those bits as the centerpiece of its practice, now faces an unprecedented glut. There are ever more of them, ever easier to access, worth less and less. School history faces a crisis of information. Mere memorization can no longer be the name of the game.

What else, other than facts-at-their-fingertips, do we expect from history education at the high school level? After a generational hiatus following the path-breaking work of the British Schools Council History Project, internationally history curriculum documents and standards statements have, in recent years, increasingly moved towards explicit definitions of historical thinking. Conceptions of what it means for students to progress in history have gone beyond the accumulation of more factual knowledge about more topics (which will not disappear), to the advancement in their ability to tackle historical problems.

Curriculum and standards statements have outpaced assessments, however. One reason for the persistence of history as memorization in assessments is the ease and efficiency with which it can be tested. By comparison, the assessment of historical thinking is a daunting – but inescapable – challenge, one we are confronting in our current projects.



In January 2012, the annual meeting of the Historical Thinking Project (HTP) was entirely devoted to assessment of historical thinking, with presentations from the United States Advanced Placement history team; a team of researchers from Malmö University, responsible for the Swedish national history assessment; Denis Shemilt, the Schools Council History Project pioneer from the UK; and a team of Stanford University researchers, along with prominent Canadian researchers and teachers.

The HTP has, from the outset, recognized the essential role of assessment and has contributed tools for classroom-based assessments, providing rubrics to assess students' work on particular lessons. Now, a new research initiative, Assessment of Historical Thinking Project, has taken the next step. An interdisciplinary team of UBC researchers is working on enriching classroom assessments, as well as enabling larger-scale school, district and provincial assessment of historical thinking.

The team comprises myself, with a background in history education; Dr. Kadriye Ercikan, with expertise in assessment and measurement; and two advanced doctoral students, Lindsay Gibson (in history education), and Juliette Lyons-Thomas (in assessment and measurement). We developed an assessment and conducted a validation study, which included a group administration to 441 Grade 11 students in Kelowna, and an individual administration of a "think-aloud" protocol, where 35 Vancouver students spoke as they read and answered the questions. Kadriye presented an overview of the project at the January HTP meeting and we presented two papers at the American Educational Research Association meetings in Vancouver.

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**