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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# FROM THE CURRICULUM TO THE CLASSROOM: MORE TEACHERS, MORE STUDENTS, MORE THINKING

A Report on the National Meeting of  
The Historical Thinking Project

# 2014

**TORONTO, ON**  
**JANUARY 23-25, 2014**

**PETER SEIXAS**  
Director

**JILL COLYER**  
National Coordinator





# THE Historical Thinking PROJECT

*Promoting critical historical literacy for the 21st century*

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Centre for the Study of  
Historical Consciousness**



Canadian  
Heritage

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histoire et éducation en réseau



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# 1. INTRODUCTION: A MATTER OF TIME



For the Historical Thinking Project, 2013-14 was the best of times and the worst of times.

It was the best of times because two of Canada's largest provinces made the most concrete and comprehensive headway in adapting the ideas of the Project for their curricula. Ontario implemented a new K-12 curriculum that embedded the historical thinking concepts as a core element of the history program. British Columbia released a draft social studies curriculum heading in much the same direction. As a result, the demands for professional development and materials in historical thinking have skyrocketed.

It was the worst of times because the Project, as it has taken shape over the past seven years, is coming to an end. The immediate trigger is the end of funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage. Since 2008, the Department has provided the bulk of the Project's support through its Canadian Studies Program. That Program has now been re-branded as "The Canada History Fund," and will focus on "projects that celebrate key milestones and people who have helped shape our country as we know it today."

As an organization dedicated to promoting "critical historical thinking for the 21st century," the Historical Thinking Project has never espoused "celebration" or nationalism as goals for history education. Rather, it has sought to promote students' competencies in making knowledgeable, rational contributions to current debates about our common pasts and common futures. Whether the topic is land claims or resource use, nation building or globalization, origin stories or tales of migration, monumental heroism or collective historical crimes, we have sought to enable teachers and museum educators to help students master the difficult tools of thoughtful, critical, evidence-based historical understanding.

Perhaps it was only a matter of time before the funders and their beneficiaries would part ways.

We have had enormous successes since the Project's inception in 2006. We have built a vibrant national network of history educators. We have enabled unprecedented conversation among provincial and territorial ministry officials responsible for history education across Canada. We have sparked a new

generation of textbooks and classroom materials that promote active historical thinking. We have developed a substantial cohort of teacher leaders able to enrich the work of their colleagues. And we have earned recognition for Canada's history education accomplishments in an international community of history educators.

Undoubtedly in Canadian history education, there is still too much rote memorization and aimless discussion, inadequate training and outdated resources. The job is not finished.

On March 31, 2014, the salary for National Coordinator Jill Colyer, whose hard work, good humour, wise decisions and creative inspiration have been absolutely central for the successes of the Project since 2009, came to an end. In addition to celebrating the accomplishments of the Project, the core question faced by the 2014 Annual General Meeting was how best to extend its impact and to keep expanding the number of people implementing historical thinking in classrooms across the country, in the absence of a nationally funded infrastructure.

Le projet de la pensée historique est mort, vive la pensée historique!

## 2. AIMS AND RATIONALE of the Historical Thinking Project

The Historical Thinking Project offered a dramatically new approach to history education— with the potential to shift fundamentally how teachers teach and how students learn. Paradoxically, at the same time, the approach did not involve a radical shift in the history or social studies curriculum. It revolved around the proposition that historical thinking — like scientific thinking in science instruction and mathematical thinking in math instruction — is central to history instruction and that students should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling.

Why this approach and emphasis on historical thinking? Why now? For most of the 20th century, history programs in Canada (like those in other countries) aimed at transmitting knowledge of a coherent national story — in English Canada, within the framework of the British imperial legacy (less so in Québec). Such programs did not necessarily place the teaching of *thinking* at the centre of their educational objectives.

In a world shaped by new technologies that have revolutionized access to and exchange of information, migrations that have upended older demographic profiles, and new demands for recognition and rights of previously silenced peoples, history is more contentious than ever. Debates over land claims, national borders, origin stories, and collective historical crimes, guilt and reparations are everywhere.

The past is no longer a single narrative of national, political progress. Students need to be equipped, by the end of their high school years, to take an active part in these debates: to be able to sift the wheat from the chaff, to find truths amidst a cacophony of politically and commercially motivated messages, and to contribute, in their own voices, to democratic discussion. History education can play a key role.

Competent historical thinkers understand both the vast differences that separate us from our ancestors and the ties that bind us to them; they can analyze historical artefacts and documents, which can give them some of the best understandings of times gone by; they can assess the validity and relevance of historical accounts, when they are used to support entry into a war, voting for a candidate, or any of the myriad decisions knowledgeable citizens in a democracy must make. All this *requires* “knowing the facts,” but “knowing the facts” is not enough. Historical thinking does not replace historical knowledge: the two are related and interdependent.

The Historical Thinking Project promoted curricula, assessments, professional development and classroom materials that support students gaining these competencies. It was remarkably successful in doing so.

**You have succeeded in changing how a great many Canadians think about history and I don't doubt you will continue to inspire future generations of history educators and their students. I am grateful to have had even the shortest association with your project and I wish you all the best in your efforts moving forward.**

**SCOTT WALLACE**, MANAGER, COMMEMORATION PROJECTS,  
MINISTRY OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

# 3. THE PROJECT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Extraordinary Success



The Historical Thinking Project began in 2006, with a partnership between the Historical Foundation and the University of British Columbia's Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (CSHC). With funding from the Canadian Council on Learning and the Department of Canadian Heritage, an international symposium of historians, history education scholars and teachers convened to map the contours of a project which would capture state-of-the-art international research on teaching and learning history and make it a potent force in Canadian classrooms. From the discussions at that meeting, a foundational Framework document was written, defining "historical thinking" around six historical thinking concepts. That Framework document, with minor revisions, became the conceptual basis on which the Project developed. (For the six concepts, see Appendix 8.3.) It was a bold vision, and, to the surprise of many who took part, it has met with extraordinary success.

### 3.1 PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM CHANGES

We know that what is prescribed in the official curriculum documents does not automatically generate change in classrooms. Nevertheless, the documents are important: that's why people fight over them.

In addition to being public statements of what students should learn, they provide openings for experienced teachers. They provide guidance for new teachers and teacher education students. And they provide the essential frameworks for producers of classroom resources.

Thus, we count the official inclusion of explicit definitions of historical thinking as learning goals and frameworks for inquiry, as major achievements of the Project. In terms of simple numbers of students, Ontario's incorporation of the concepts, K-12, is the single largest curriculum revision.

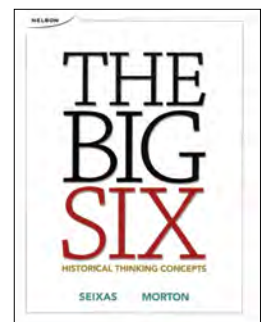
- British Columbia, K-9 Social Studies (draft discussion document)
- Manitoba, Grade 11, Canadian History
- New Brunswick, Grade 11, Modern History
- Newfoundland and Labrador, Grade 10, Newfoundland and Labrador Studies
- Northwest Territories, Grade 5, Canadian History
- Nova Scotia, Grade 6, World History
- Nunavut and Northwest Territories, Residential Schools mandatory curriculum

- Ontario, Grades 1-8 History, Geography and Social Studies
- Ontario, Grades 9-12 Canadian and World Studies
- Ontario College of Teachers, Additional Qualifications courses for teachers, History (all levels)

### 3.2 RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Without appropriate classroom resources, the best curriculum documents are like a rudder without a ship. Among our achievements are not only the exemplary lessons which have been published to the Project website, but also materials authored outside of the Project that have incorporated the six historical thinking concepts from the Framework document. All of the major Canadian textbook publishers have at least one book based on the HTP model of historical thinking, and several more are under development as this is being written.

The publication of *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (2012) and *Les six concepts de la pensée historique* (2013) offered the most complete explication of the historical thinking model along with suggestions for use in classrooms, for teachers, curriculum developers and assessment designers. At the end of 2013, 2,409 copies had been sold.



**For teachers:**

- *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Nelson Education), in French, *Les six concepts de la pensée historique* (Modulo)
- *Teaching About Historical Thinking*, The Critical Thinking Consortium's single best-selling title, now translated into French, *Enseigner la pensée historique*
- Teacher Resource package for the CBC film "Sir John A: Birth of a Country" (2011)
- Teacher Resource package for the Historical-Dominion Institute website, Sir John A Days, <http://sirjohnaday.com/> (2011)

**For students:**

- Sam Steele, *The Journey of a Canadian Hero*, University of Alberta Archives, <http://steele.library.ualberta.ca> (2012)
- War of 1812: Historical Thinking Series, War of 1812 Secretariat, [www.1812.gc.ca](http://www.1812.gc.ca) (2012)
- Take 2 Video Series, The Critical Thinking Consortium, [www.tc2.ca](http://www.tc2.ca) (2012)
- History Docs Packages, The Critical Thinking Consortium, [www.tc2.ca](http://www.tc2.ca) (2012/2013)
- *Canadian Identity*, Grade 8, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nelson Education Canada (2011)
- *Shaping Canada*, Grade 11, Manitoba, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Canada (2011)
- *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, Grade 10, NL, Ministry of Education (2010)
- *Creating Canada*, Grade 10, Ontario, McGraw-Hill Ryerson (2010)
- *Adventures in World History*, Grade 12, Ontario, Emond Montgomery Publishing (2010)
- *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues*, 2nd edition, Grade 11, BC, Pearson Education (2010)

- Historical thinking classroom worksheets, CBC: News in Review, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2009 and 2010)
- *Horizons: Canada's Emerging Identity*, 2nd edition, Grade 10, BC, Pearson Education (2009)
- *CSI: Canadian Sources Investigated*, Grade 10, Ontario, Emond Montgomery (2009)
- *Exemplars in Historical Thinking: 20th Century Canada*, The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>) (2008)
- *Their Stories, Our History*, Grade 8, Ontario, Thomson Duval (Nelson) Publishing (2007)
- *Close-Up Canada*, Grade 7, Ontario, Oxford University Press (2007)
- *Flashback Canada*, Grade 8, Ontario Oxford University Press (2007)

**3.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The most extended professional development programs that the Project offered were summer institutes, generally five and a half solid days, including field trips to local sites and guest speakers. In order to achieve maximum impact, the model was based on "train the trainers:" most participants were highly experienced teachers, professors or museum educators and held positions where they would be able to develop materials and help others become more expert in teaching historical thinking through their own professional development leadership. A significant number of participants from outside Canada regularly took part.

2007, Winnipeg, in partnership with Historica, using the newly drafted Framework

2010, Ottawa, in partnership with Library and Archives Canada

2011, Vancouver, in partnership with St. John's College, UBC

2012, Toronto, in partnership with Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

2013, Halifax, in partnership with Pier 21 Museum of Immigration

2013, Toronto, in partnership with Centre for Social Innovation



**Summer Institute 2013 Halifax. At the Thibodeau archeology dig, Hants County, Nova Scotia. Excavation site leader Sara Beanlands, foreground, far right.**



**Summer Institute 2013, Halifax. Participants visiting the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.**

We also created a variety of successful workshop models (see Highlights 2013). As our catalogue of print and on-line teacher resources expanded, we were able to deliver more efficient and more effective workshops.

### 3.4 NETWORKING

The first large General Meeting took place in Vancouver in 2008. “Scaling Up the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking” recommended, among other things, the hiring of a national coordinator. After a national search, the Project hired Jill Colyer in 2009. And the “scaling up” began. She helped to institute regular, annual general meetings, which began in 2010. In addition to showcasing exemplary educational practices, debating pedagogical approaches, and deliberating on future directions, these events have been the occasion for the single most important pan-Canadian meeting of ministry officials, teacher organizations executives, post-secondary history educators, public history professionals and history teachers. Participants frequently refer to the invaluable opportunities to share ideas and strategies in facing common problems and challenges. These meetings have been generously funded by The History Education Network/Histoire et éducation en réseau, (THEN/HiER, Dr. Penney Clark, Principal Investigator).

### AGM Themes

- 2008 Scaling Up
- 2010 A Big Step Forward
- 2011 Continuing the Momentum
- 2012 Assessment of Historical Thinking
- 2013 Linking Historical Thinking Concepts, Content and Competencies
- 2014 From the Curriculum to the Classroom: More Teachers, More Students, More Thinking

### 3.5 ASSESSMENT

Assessment plays a key role in changing teaching and learning. Without valid assessments that target historical thinking, teachers are missing a key component of their repertoire. Ministries that mandate historical thinking as learning goals are obligated to provide guidance for assessing the achievement of those goals, if not the assessment themselves. The Project has recognized these principles since its outset.

After the 2012 AGM, devoted to assessment of historical thinking, Kadriye Ercikan (a UBC professor specializing in measurement and evaluation) and Peter Seixas invited sixteen author teams, from Canada, the United States, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, to contribute to an edited collection to address the issues. Routledge will publish the volume in 2015 as part of the THEN/HiER series on history education.

## 4. HIGHLIGHTS 2013



The Project's activities in 2013 were severely compromised by the fact that we faced a couple of significant operational challenges. One of these was the fact that the mandate of our major financial provider changed during the year and we were asked to submit a revised funding request for only one year, rather than the three-year request we had previously been asked to submit. As well, while we waited for word on the status of our funds, we had to operate on borrowed funds for the first half of the fiscal year. Although we were hopeful our funding would eventually be released, we were not able to enter into collaborations and new projects freely just in case the funding did not materialize. As well, writing and repeatedly revising funding applications to new requirements consumed a great deal of operational time.

Despite these two significant impediments, in 2013 we exceeded all targets set for the Project. These include targets related to Summer Institutes, workshops, poster distribution, new projects and collaborations, and curriculum adoptions.

### 4.1 SUMMER INSTITUTES

Demand for spaces in the Institutes has grown over the years so, in 2013 for the first time, we decided to run two separate Summer Institutes.

The first Summer Institute of 2013 was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Twenty-six classroom teachers, museum educators, archivists, and academics from across the country joined us for the Institute in Halifax and participated in off-site trips to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and an archaeological dig at a former Acadian farm, and heard from guest speakers from Pier 21.

The second Summer Institute of 2013 took place at the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto, Ontario. Twenty-three educators, academics, and museum educators from across the country as well as the United States, Sweden, and Indonesia joined us in Toronto and participated in off-site trips to the Royal Ontario Museum, the heritage Distillery District, and heard from guest speakers Professor Ruth Sandwell from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, and Professor Robert Johnson from the University of Toronto.



**Final Presentation: Tom Osborne, Olle Haglund, and Patrik Johansson, "Why Did the World Change in the 1500s?" Summer Institute 2013 Toronto.**

**I think you achieved the goal of building a critical mass of people who have been inspired by these ideas and who will continue to move this work forward into the future.**

**NICK POESCHEK, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, BC**

As always, we were very impressed by the quality of the participants and the exciting dialogue and learning that occurred during the Institutes. Those present returned to their jurisdictions and began their own training with local colleagues, and crafted their own projects integrating the concepts.

By early 2013 we had two Summer Institutes booked for 2014 at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick. After we learned that our funding would be discontinued, we cancelled those plans and moved ahead with one institute to be held at the Museum of Vancouver in 2014.

**HISTORICAL THINKING SUMMER INSTITUTE**  
a partnership with




**MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER**  
Monday, July 7–Friday, July 11

**JULY 7–12, 2014**

**UBC VANCOUVER CAMPUS**  
Saturday, July 12

**HISTORICAL THINKING** is now included as a foundation of the Ontario history curriculum. It plays a key role in the new draft social studies curriculum in British Columbia. Other Canadian provinces are moving in the same direction.

The summer institute is designed for teachers, graduate students, curriculum developers, professional development leaders and museum educators who want to enhance their expertise at designing and teaching history courses and programs with explicit attention to historical thinking.

The 2014 Historical Thinking Summer Institute explores six historical thinking concepts.

These concepts will shape our exploration of two substantive themes: Aboriginal-settler relations, and human-nature relations over time. We will use local cases, resources and expertise available in Vancouver, but the work will be applicable to other locations across Canada and internationally.

**Register by May 15**  
for credit, or non-credit professional development



**historical thinking concepts**

1. evidence
2. significance
3. continuity & change
4. cause & consequence
5. perspective-taking
6. the ethical dimension of history

**DR. PETER SEIXAS** is the director of The Historical Thinking Project, as well as the Director of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. He taught high school social studies in Vancouver for fifteen years, and earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of California at Los Angeles.

He is the author of numerous scholarly works. His latest book *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* – co-written with Tom Morton – is a PD resource for teachers from Grades 7 to 12. It was published in the summer of 2012. Dr. Seixas is currently a professor and Canada Research Chair in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.

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#### Flyer for 2014 Summer Institute in Vancouver

Your email stunned me beyond belief...  
History, as we all know, easily lends itself to be moulded by the powers that be, which makes the critical approach to the discipline all the more important in the education of our future citizenry.

**CANJITA GOMES-FERNANDES**, HISTORY CONSULTANT  
ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD

#### 4.2 WORKSHOPS

By 2012 it was apparent that interest and demand for professional learning workshops was exceeding the capacity of the Project. We also knew that the revised Ontario curriculum, that incorporates the concepts across grades 1 to 12, would be released in 2013 and this would heighten interest and demand for workshops. At the end of 2012, the coordinator identified key teachers who had a deep understanding of the concepts, and were excellent teachers, to lead workshops on behalf of the Project. The coordinator trained six teachers by the end of 2012.

As we began 2013, one of our long-range goals was to have a selection of educators, trained to work with the concepts, available to facilitate workshops in each province/territory of the country. We had planned to identify and train those teachers throughout 2013.

Early in 2013, the new Ontario facilitators began running workshops on behalf of the Project. These facilitators — Rachel Collishaw in Ottawa, and Risa Gluskin, Scott Pollock and Ian Duncan in Toronto and south-western Ontario — joined Allan Hux and Jill Colyer in meeting demand in Ontario, while Lindsay Gibson, Tom Morton, and Janet Thompson continued to give workshops in British Columbia. Jennifer Janzen continued to be our facilitator in Manitoba, Jade Ballek was on board to begin workshoping in Saskatchewan, and Anthony Asturi gave his first workshops on behalf of the Project in Nova Scotia. Workshop bookings continued to be coordinated by Jill Colyer.

However, when it became apparent that our application for funding for another three years was in jeopardy, we did not pursue training any additional facilitators. As well, we cancelled all plans to actively promote and market our availability to give workshops.

Despite that lack of promotion, we gave 45 workshops across the country to approximately 1,850 teachers.

### 4.3 POSTER DISTRIBUTION

As we began our 2013 fiscal year, one of our goals was to grow our contacts list. We felt this would increase the name recognition of the Project, get more educators using the concepts, and ignite workshop opportunities and new collaborations. To this end, we added the offer of a free set of historical thinking posters for anyone who clicked “Participate” and shared their contact information on our website.

Response to this offer was so great that we had to hire a part-time student to clear the backlog of poster requests that had come into the head office at the University of British Columbia. At this point we decided to remove that offer from the website.

From April 1 to December 31, 2013, we shipped 1,030 sets of English posters and 235 sets of French posters.



### 4.4 NEW PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

Because our operational funds were on hold for most of 2013 we did not take an aggressive approach to generating new projects and collaborations. However, interest in, and respect for, the Project have grown to the point that other agencies and history organizations approached us with new project ideas. These projects included:



- A partnership with the Nunavut Department of Education and The Great Canadian Mysteries Project on the disappearance of the Franklin Expedition;
- Collaboration with the Association of Canadian Studies in the planning of, and participation in, the PEI 2014 conference;
- Ongoing work with Pier 21 related to the integration of the concepts into the work of museums;
- A partnership between the Project, Ontario Historical Society, and the Ontario Elementary Social Studies Teachers' Association in the creation and delivery of a webinar on historical thinking and the new Ontario curriculum to hundreds of teachers in Ontario;
- Ongoing work with the Ontario and British Columbia Heritage Fairs Associations;
- Collaboration with *Canada's History* on the creation of new history contest questions.

### 4.5 CURRICULUM ADOPTIONS

The year 2013 was a big one in terms of curriculum adoptions. The province of Ontario integrated historical thinking concepts across grade levels from 1 to 12. This adoption is the first provincial/territorial adoption that will see the integration of the concepts across multiple grades. This provides for the important opportunity to build increasingly sophisticated layers of the concepts as students proceed across grade levels.

The other big news in 2013 was that the British Columbia Ministry of Education announced that its revised K-9 Social Studies curriculum will integrate the concepts.

A draft document related to this development was circulated in 2013. The curriculum itself is to be developed through 2014.

These developments join the adoptions already in place in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Quebec.

It is fair to say that, with the adoptions in Ontario and British Columbia, more than half of the English-speaking teachers and school children in the country will be working with historical thinking concepts in their classrooms over the next decade.

## 5. 2014 ANNUAL MEETING



Each annual meeting has had a theme reflecting the current state of the Project. Each year, we have looked back at accomplishments, showcased some of the best work that was being done in the promotion of historical thinking, and held discussions about where we should be headed next and how we can get there. 2014 was no different, except that it was the last such meeting.

It included presentations of exemplary work from the classroom, at the policy level in ministries, from non-profit partners, and for the first time, from the for-profit publishing sector, which decided, importantly, that historical thinking might even be a paying proposition.

And the wonderful thing is, none of this fine work will come to an end. These initiatives do not depend on money from a central body like the Historical Thinking Project in order to carry on. Indeed, they all provide models for people in other provinces, in other school districts, in other classrooms, and in other kinds of institutions for how historical thinking can be taught, learned, promoted, and communicated. And, with the Historical Thinking Project's ideas being officially adopted in more and more curricula, this kind of work will accelerate in the coming years.

What then should be done, in the absence of a pan-Canadian organization, in order to lend as much momentum and support to these initiatives as possible? Exploring this question was the second major topic of the meeting. Participants benefited from reports by Nancy McTygue, Executive Director, and Emma Hipolita, UCLA Site Director of the California History Social Science Project, a massive, multi-site professional development project, which has faced ups and downs in funding for over two decades.

Finally, roundtable sessions provided opportunities to generate ideas for carrying forward and developing historical thinking through multiple avenues. Participants engaged in discussions with two guiding principles:

1. Protect what had been accomplished
2. Promote further developments

In the roundtables, ministry representatives expressed a desire to continue to collaborate by maintaining an informal network using technology. Nunavut agreed to facilitate the first of what all hoped would be regularly scheduled teleconferences. There was agreement that the historical thinking concepts would continue in each jurisdiction and sharing would help to promote best practices.

Ministry representatives also identified that the historical thinking concepts can play a key role in bridging of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Representatives reported that First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) communities are hungry to hear their own stories; they see their identities honoured and valued through the concepts of historical thinking. Given that many FNMI initiatives are underway at the federal and provincial levels, and the FNMI communities have a position of power, there may be support for historical thinking through other federal agencies.



**Panel of ministry representatives: Mindy Willett, NWT; Jennifer Farrell-Cordon, ON; Nick Poeschek, BC; Peter Seixas, Chair; Renee Gillis, MB; Linda Mlodzinski, MB**

Finally, ministries are generally committed to continued incorporation of historical thinking concepts into their history and social studies curriculum renewal projects, as they are able within their jurisdictional context and priorities.

Most of the teachers' association representatives also came together in a single group, setting dates for regional Google hangout meetings. They, too, saw opportunities in FNMI-oriented initiatives in historical thinking. They discussed other methods of sharing ideas and maintaining momentum, highlighting the centrality of professional development for teachers.

Several groups suggested that the most promising strategies may be to "go broad," i.e., pitch historical thinking in terms of literacy, perhaps emphasizing "historical literacy" to underscore the point. Other networking ideas were also floated.

Supplementing these ideas, in response to the e-mailed notice of the end of the project, we received numerous other suggestions including conferences and workshops, a national history education journal, a theme week with two blogs per day on ActiveHistory.ca (March 17-21, 2014), initiatives within other organizations including the CHA, and historical thinking pages within other organizations' websites, e.g., [www.pier21.ca/blog/steve-schwinghamer/historical-thinking-1-practicing-history-in-the-museum](http://www.pier21.ca/blog/steve-schwinghamer/historical-thinking-1-practicing-history-in-the-museum)

## 5.1 PRESENTATIONS AND PRESENTERS

**STEFANO FORNAZZARI and DARAIUS BHARUCHA** are teachers from York Region District School Board in Ontario.

Stefano and Daraius presented on their student project "My Place in Canadian History." The project has students plot their own family history alongside the major events covered in the Grade 10 course Canadian History from 1914. The project integrates historical thinking each step of the process. The presenters won the Governor General's Teaching Award for their work on this project.

**JILL BISHOP** is a consultant from the Durham District Board of Education in Ontario.

Jill presented the online professional learning course for teachers that she created on historical thinking. This online course was created as an alternative to face-to-face professional development, which can be hard to schedule and even harder to fund at the district level. Participants who successfully complete the course receive a copy of *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton.

**KEN BEARDSALL and LIZ FOWLER** are educators from Nunavut. Beardsall is Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator in Nunavut, and Liz Fowler is a consultant and freelance writer based in the Northwest Territories.

Ken and Liz presented on the Nunavut curriculum and how it can be aligned with the historical thinking concepts. This presentation helped shed light on the convergence of the historical thinking concepts and aboriginal ways of knowing.

**DAVID STEELE** is Director of the School Division at Oxford University Press.

David presented on a new suite of digital and print student resources that incorporate the thinking concepts and an inquiry model of instruction.

**SUSAN COX** is Social Studies Publisher at Pearson Education.

Susan presented on the changes taking place in the publishing industry, including a shift to a global publishing model with a focus on efficacy.

I am saddened to learn about the termination of the Historical Thinking Project's funding. Your Project and the resources you have created have been incredibly useful in my classes, especially for classes with a high number of non-history majors, as well as in my own thinking about my professional life.

**TOM PEACE**, ACADIA UNIVERSITY, NOVA SCOTIA

**RACHEL COLLISHAW** is a teacher from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

Rachel presented on behalf of Nelson Education on *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*. She also presented on a new student resource aimed at the Grade 10 applied level Canadian history course in Ontario.

**USHA JAMES** is Director of Innovation and Development at *The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>)*.

Usha presented on a variety of resources published by TC<sup>2</sup> that concern the integration and assessment of historical thinking. These include the PD book *Teaching Historical Thinking*, the *Take Two* video series, and *History Docs*.

**JOEL RALPH** is Director of Audience Development and User Engagement at *Canada's History*.

Joel presented on a new history essay competition for students. A variety of essay questions, developed in conjunction with Professors Peter Seixas and Penney Clark, were presented and discussed.

**NICK POESCHEK**, Ministry of Education, British Columbia; **LINDA MLODZINSKI**, Ministry of Education, Manitoba; **JENNIFER FARRELL-CORDON**, Ministry of Education, Ontario; and **MINDY WILLETT**, Department of Education, Northwest Territories.

Each of these education officers presented on curriculum initiatives that include historical thinking in their respective jurisdictions. Each of these jurisdictions is at a different stage of implementation.

**EMMA HIPOLITO** and **NANCY MCTYGUE** work with *The California History/Social Science Project*.

Emma and Nancy presented on the scope of the California project, their outreach and training model, and the many funding partners they have secured to support their work.

**ROMY COOPER** and **GRAEME COTTON** are teachers from the Vancouver School Board in British Columbia.

Romy and Graeme presented on the award-winning work they have done with Heritage Fairs in British Columbia. Their students integrate historical thinking concepts into their heritage fair projects for more meaningful and insightful work.

**RISA GLUSKIN** and **SCOTT POLLOCK** are teachers from the Toronto District School Board and Halton District School Board in Ontario.

Risa and Scott shared the work they have done integrating historical thinking into their senior level world history courses and the success their students have had in "thinking historically."

**JANET THOMPSON** is a teacher from the Vancouver School Board in British Columbia.

Janet shared a summary of the work in historical thinking she has done with students over the past few years. She also shared the way her assessment models and methods have changed to more accurately measure thinking and to provide ongoing, targeted feedback to her students.

My guess is that the astonishing intellectual inroads the Project has made over the past five years will not soon be grown over and forgotten. The historical thinking of generations of students in Canada will undoubtedly be clearer and deeper because of this work, and we can rightly expect them to be more open to the rational exchange of perspectives and ideas as adults. Not an inconsequential legacy. You should all feel proud.

**LINDA FARR DARLING**, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## 6. "A HISTORY EDUCATOR LOOKS FORWARD" Alan Sears (with apologies to Ken Osborne)



Peter Seixas' December 2013 announcement that federal government funding that had largely sustained the Historical Thinking Project since 2008 would not be renewed provoked a swift and visceral reaction from the wide community of those associated with the Project. One high school teacher who had worked with the Project from early on spoke for many when she said, "I am gutted."

As is clear from this and other annual reports, the project has made a significant impact on history education in Canada ranging from the classroom to policymaking, publishing, and higher education. The force of the reaction from participants stems from a fear those considerable gains will be lost without the extensive national coordination and collaboration made possible by government funding. Indeed, the history of history education in Canada and elsewhere demonstrates there is justification for this concern.

In a 2012 article for the *Canadian Historical Review*, veteran history teacher and education professor Ken Osborne reflected, "I hold great hopes for the current emphasis on teaching students to think historically," but he also made the point that many of the key elements of the historical thinking movement have been around for a century and have made very little substantial impact on the teaching of history in schools:

*My pursuit of the history of history education has been both intriguing and depressing; intriguing in that I discovered a largely forgotten history of debate, argument, and experimentation stretching back to the 1880s; depressing in that it had so little impact on the classroom. I concluded that ever since the 1920s we have known what is involved in teaching history well, but we have been unable to translate what we know into classroom reality. (CHR 93(1): 132)*

In view of this history of failure, is there any reason to be optimistic that the progress made in history education in Canada through the auspices of the Historical Thinking Project will endure? Or, to put it another way, is there reason to hope Osborne's accurate but bleak analysis that despite knowing what to do not much ever changes in classrooms might not hold in this case?

In reflecting on my own experience over almost forty years of teaching, I am optimistic that things might actually be different this time; that the changes begun by the Historical Thinking Project might just last. My hope is grounded in eight reasons.



**Alan Sears, University  
of New Brunswick**

### PERVASIVE CONSENSUS

The Historical Thinking Project is part of a global movement in promoting the development of historical thinking as a central purpose of history education. It has captured the policy agenda in education systems across Europe, North America, Australia, and other parts of the world. Specific frameworks for historical thinking vary in different jurisdictions, but common to them all is an emphasis on developing student competencies with the key disciplinary processes of historical work — students are expected not only to know what historians know, but also how historians know.

This pervasive consensus is not only geographical but also crosses sectors of the history education community that have often worked in isolation from each other. In Canada and around the world, ministries of education, teachers, museum curators, public historians, and educationists are embracing this approach to history education. This substantial cross boundary work is unprecedented in public education reform and augers well for the future.

### SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENTIARY BASE

Beginning with work stemming from the Schools Council History Project in Britain, scholars from around the world have built a substantial evidentiary base for how students and teachers think about and learn history. We now know that societal context matters in how people think about history; that American, Irish, and Québécois students, for example, have powerful and highly contextualized cognitive scripts of their own society's history and that these shape new learning in significant ways. We also know that with appropriate scaffolding young children can learn to use the procedural concepts of history in surprisingly sophisticated ways. These are just two examples of key findings from a range of work in history education. This kind of evidence is invaluable in developing nuanced teaching materials and approaches and lends considerable force to arguments about why historical thinking should be an important focus for history education.

### CLEAR AND DETAILED DELINEATION OF CONCEPTS AND IDEAS

In his groundbreaking work in history education in the early 1990s Sam Wineburg demonstrated the gap between the ways in which historians and high school students engage with sources and began the process of delineating specific aspects of what sophisticated practice looks like in this area. Building on that and other work, a key focus of the Historical Thinking Project has been to describe a range of procedural concepts in historical thinking (such as sourcing) in considerable detail including what they look like at varying degrees of complexity. These are laid out in the book *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* and elsewhere, and are invaluable in helping teachers understand the nuances of historical thinking in order to plan and assess effectively.

### BETTER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE TEACHING MATERIALS

In the past twenty years there has been a sea change in the accessibility of primary source historical materials for school use. First, the archivists themselves recognized that students not only could engage in historical research, they were enthusiastic about it and have begun to facilitate access in new ways.

Second, digital technologies have made sources more widely available than could have been imagined in the era of the new social studies. Important holdings of archives and museums from around the world are now open for researchers of all kinds to access. There is still much that is not online, but there are few topics about which teachers and students cannot find accessible primary sources with which to work.

### INTERSECTING SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

I wrote about the importance of the cross-disciplinary consensus on historical thinking above and one of the most exciting expressions of this is collaboration across educational boundaries that used to be fairly impermeable. The History Education Network (THEN/HiER) is an important example of this. The executive board of the network includes historians, educationists, teachers, museum curators, and graduate students and this is representative of the kinds of collaborations the network supports. It is difficult to overemphasize how innovative and important this is. From the beginning the Historical Thinking Project has engaged collaborators from the broad spectrum of the history education community.

Boundaries and suspicions have often existed between educationists and historians, as well as between university based and public historians. These divisions have not served the cause of history education well and their breaking down is a very positive sign.

### EMERGING IDEAS FOR ASSESSMENT

The homepage on the website for the Historical Thinking Project begins the general description of the project with central questions about assessment: "What should students know after 12 years of studying history in school? What should they be able to do with their knowledge?" The page goes on to assert, "Surely they should have more than the accumulation of memorized facts to show for years of study." But the truth is, too often in the past that is exactly what we expected students to show for years of study. We really did not know what else to assess.

The clear delineation of the central concepts and processes of historical thinking described above provides a rich framework for judging student progress in the area.

The challenge has been to design assessment tasks that will provide the data necessary to make accurate and timely decisions about student attainment. This part of the movement is still in its infancy but there is a plethora of work going on at universities, ministries of education, and through testing organizations to develop both large-scale and classroom-based assessment models and tools. These will provide valuable feedback to students, teachers, curriculum planners, and researchers and enhance the credibility of history with policy makers and the public.

#### **EMERGING UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

Many teachers, even those with majors in history, have little or no first hand experience with the processes of doing history. They haven't struggled to define a new, significant question about the past, sat with a pile of diverse sources trying to weigh their relative merits and build an argument, or tried to make judgements about the moral actions of historical agents in particular times and places. They haven't, in other words, had to think historically but rather have been relatively passive observers of others' attempts to do so.

History teacher education, both pre-service and in-service ought to engage students in doing history. One way to increase the chances of this happening is through greater collaboration in undergraduate education between disciplinary specialists in history departments and pedagogical specialists in faculties of education. The forthcoming *Becoming a History Teacher*, edited by Ruth Sandwell and Amy von Heyking (University of Toronto Press) explores innovative examples of these and other aspects of emergent practice in preparing history teachers. This burgeoning attention to the role of teacher education in fostering historical thinking will greatly enhance the potential for teachers to engage in the practice in their classrooms.

#### **OFFICIAL SANCTION**

In 2013, Ontario became the latest province to infuse the model of historical thinking developed and promulgated by the Historical Thinking Project in its curriculum. The

model now shows up in curricula, textbooks and other teaching material across Canada. As Linda Mlodzincki from the Manitoba Ministry of Education said at the annual meeting, the range, depth, and speed with which the ideas of the Historical Thinking Project have permeated the field in Canada and been given official sanction is unprecedented. This is testimony to many of the points raised above including the clear and accessible delineation of the historical thinking concepts, the ongoing collaboration with practitioners and policy makers, and the quality and range of available teaching materials. This high level of official sanction lays a strong foundation for the ongoing proliferation of the ideas and approaches of the Historical Thinking Project.

So, for these eight reasons I am optimistic that the Historical Thinking Project might be the catalyst for breaking the barrier Ken Osborne identified and finally making what we know about good practice in the teaching of history more common in classrooms across the country. There will be, of course, ongoing challenges. We have to maintain the high level of work in all the areas identified above and especially in those just emerging as areas of focus such as assessment and teacher education. In addition, we need to continue to resist those who would limit the history curriculum both in the broad sense — vis-à-vis other subjects such as math and literacy — and in the more narrow sense of limiting history education to the commemoration of great national events. We also must push for minimum certification standards for those who teach history. The fostering of disciplinary expertise in students requires teachers with considerable disciplinary experience themselves. Now that the curriculum requires the former, we need to advocate for the latter.

The termination of federal government funding is a serious blow to the Historical Thinking Project but need not be a fatal one. The Project began without such funding and had significant success in most of the areas outlined above before receiving any government funds. The money has allowed for the building and deepening of key networks that have helped extend both the ideas and the resources for teaching them. An extraordinarily strong foundation has been built and there is every reason to hope it will continue to sustain our work together in the future.

## 7. THE END OF THE PROJECT and an Opening for Historical Thinking Project 2.0



After the meeting, Bethany Doiron, from the Prince Edward Island Ministry of Education, wrote:

*Like its predecessors, this meeting was a rich experience in connecting and sharing ideas with others who are passionate about history education and critical thought, and who value the immense effort that you have put in over the past years. I can still recall the very first time you introduced [the historical thinking] concepts, Peter, at the Historica meeting — it was like a light bulb coming on for every educator in the room. (As I recall, the late Mr. Laurier LaPierre was a tad contrary at the time but he had no way of knowing the impact to come!)*

*It has been wonderful to see the concepts spread across the country and work their way into curricula, resources, and the minds of teachers and students. For those who may have been intuitively teaching this way, it is an “aha” moment that says, “So, I was on the right track, after all!” and, for those who are new to thinking and teaching with the concepts, it brings a different kind of “aha” moment. There will be plenty of those moments as more and more teachers and students become familiar and comfortable with “thinking historically”.*

*Once again, many thanks for this and past opportunities to connect and to be part of the groundswell that is (finally) bringing change to history classrooms!*

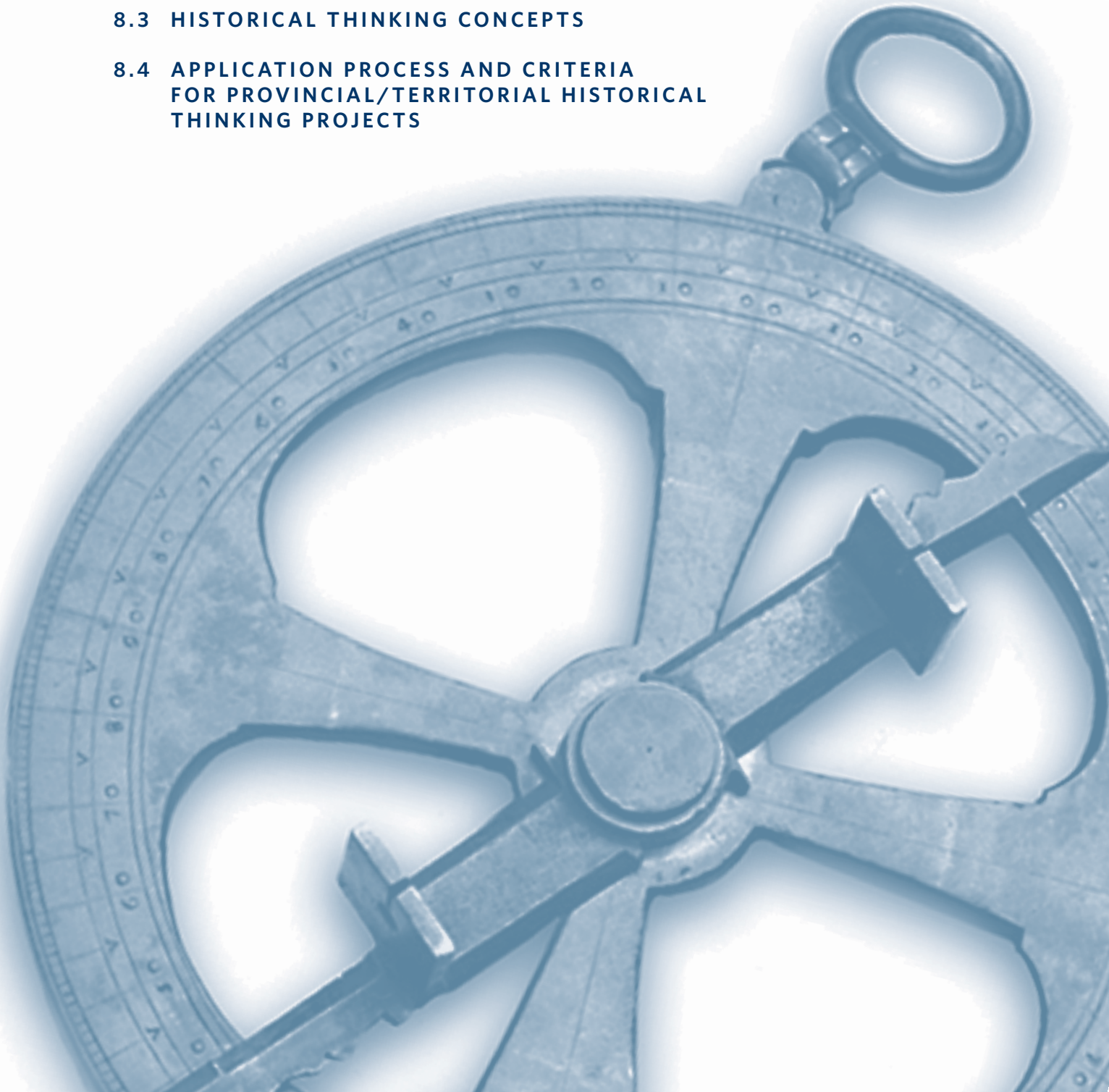
So, where do we go from here? First, though its shape is not immediately apparent, we do not rule out Historical Thinking Project 2.0. Such a revival would require most importantly people, who had the time, energy and institutional location to seek and secure funding. It could happen in a year or two or three. But it raises the question: what would be required to keep a “pilot light” alive, in case the opportunity came along to “turn on the gas?” Here is the five-point plan:

1. Maintain the Executive Committee to make key decisions about the intellectual property of the Project. It currently consists of Jill Colyer, Lindsay Gibson, Allan Hux, Carla Peck and Peter Seixas.
2. Maintain the Historical Thinking Project website. We will launch a simplified site in spring 2014, which will be manageable from the office of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, preserving the information and resources on the current site with a more current, streamlined look.
3. Protect the name and logo: don't leave them available to anyone doing anything. These are copyrighted with the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness.
4. Promote provincial and territorial groups with a formal process of application and approval for provincial historical thinking projects, using the name and materials. (See Appendix 8.4.)
5. Maintain a workshop facilitators' list of those who have established a record of giving workshops up to this point, maintain the listserv, continue to distribute posters on a cost-recovery basis, and continue to offer historical thinking summer institutes (summer 2014 in collaboration with the Museum of Vancouver.)

It's been a great ride!! Many thanks and many congratulations to all who have been on board!!

## 8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 PARTICIPANT LIST
- 8.2 MEETING AGENDA
- 8.3 HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPTS
- 8.4 APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL HISTORICAL THINKING PROJECTS



APPENDIX  
8.1

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APPENDIX  
8.2

## MEETING AGENDA

## THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2014

- 7:00 pm** **Optional Reception** — light fare, cash bar  
*Lobby Lounge*

## FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2014

- 8:00 am** **Breakfast**  
*Lobby Lounge*

- 9:00 am** **Welcome and Introductions**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*

- **Peter Seixas**, Director, Historical Thinking Project, University of British Columbia
- **Penney Clark**, Director, THEN/HIER, University of British Columbia
- **Carla Peck**, University of Alberta
- **Jill Colyer**, National Coordinator, The Historical Thinking Project, Ontario (The Year in Review)

- 9:30 am** **Keynote Address and Roundtable 1**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*

**PETER SEIXAS**

Small group discussions followed by plenary discussion

- 10:45 am** **Nutrition Break**  
*Lobby Lounge*

- 11:00 am** **Plenary Session: Implementation Snapshots**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*

**JILL COLYER, CHAIR**

- **Stefano Fornazzari** and **Daraius Bharucha**, York Region DSB, ON (HT for students)
- **Jill Bishop**, Durham DSB, ON (HT for educators)
- **Ken Beardsall** and **Liz Fowler**, Nunavut Ministry of Education (HT in curriculum)

- 12:00 pm** **Lunch**  
*Lobby Lounge*

- 1:00 pm** **HT in Student and Professional Resources**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*

**CARLA PECK, CHAIR**

- **David Steele**, Director, School Division, Oxford University Press
- **Susan Cox**, Publisher, Social Studies, Pearson Canada
- **Usha James**, Director, Innovation and Development, TC<sup>2</sup>
- **Rachel Collishaw**, Teacher, Glebe Colligate (Ottawa), for Nelson Education
- **Joel Ralph**, Director, Canada's History, Audience Development and User Engagement

- 2:15 pm** **Plenary Session: Provincial and Territorial Curriculum Updates**

*Sovereign Ballroom*

**PETER SEIXAS, CHAIR**

- **Nick Poeschek**, Ministry of Education, British Columbia
- **Linda Mlodzinski**, Renée Gillis, Ministry of Education, Manitoba
- **Jennifer Farrell-Cordon**, Ministry of Education, Ontario
- **Mindy Willett**, Ministry of Education, Northwest Territories

- 3:00 pm** **Nutrition Break**  
*Lobby Lounge*

- 3:15 pm** **Roundtable 2: Promoting Historical Thinking Goals at the Provincial, District and School Level**

*Sovereign Ballroom*

**CARLA PECK, CHAIR****OPENING REMARKS: ALAN SEARS**

1. What are the avenues for implementation available? (Key contacts and stakeholders that hold the keys to implementation? — is it teacher federations? Principals? Directors?)
2. What are some key initiatives that could be tied to HT and discipline-based thinking to facilitate implementation?
3. What networks could you help develop?

**SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2014**

- 8:00 am Breakfast**  
*Lobby Lounge*
- 9:00 am Historical Thinking in a  
Canada-Sized-Population State**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*
- INTRODUCTION, PETER SEIXAS**
- Emma Hipolito and Nancy McTygue, The California History/Social Science Project
- 10:00 am Plenary Session:  
Integration of Historical Thinking**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*
- JILL COLYER, CHAIR**
- Romy Cooper and Graeme Cotton, Vancouver SB, BC  
(Integration of HT into Heritage Fair projects)
  - Risa Gluskin and Scott Pollock, Toronto DSB and Halton DSB, ON  
(Integration of HT into world history courses)
  - Janet Thompson, Vancouver SB, BC  
(Integration of HT, Assessment, and Best Practices)
- 11:00 am Roundtable 3: Legacy Options and  
Legacy Building**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*
- INTRODUCTION, PETER SEIXAS**
- 12:15 pm Closing Remarks and Lunch**  
*Sovereign Ballroom*
- JILL COLYER AND CARLA PECK**

*From beyond the borders...*

The Historical Thinking Project has generated a great deal of interest and support among history teachers and history educationists internationally, and certainly in Australia.

**ANNA CLARK**, UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AUSTRALIA

*I am very sorry to hear about this. Very sorry.*

**SAM WINEBURG**, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, USA

*This message came as a shock to me. I never expected that a project so successful as yours could stop suddenly like this...*

**ARIE WILSCHUT**, AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, NETHERLANDS

*From a Swedish perspective, the Historical Thinking Project has contributed a great deal in advancing research and curriculum development related to history education.*

**PER ELIASSON**, MALMÖ UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

APPENDIX  
**8.3**

# HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPTS

The six concepts that serve as the framework for the Historical Thinking Project provide a way of mapping historical thinking to make it manageable for teaching and learning. Since circulating the Framework Document (2006) that defined the historical thinking concepts, further work has refined “powerful understandings” entailed by each of them. Tom Morton has made invaluable contributions to the refinement. Each of the concepts can be explained in a way that a 9 or 10 year old would understand. On the other hand, they can also be identified in the writings of expert historians. This range of applicability—from the simple to the sophisticated—makes them useful for teachers of history across the school years, certainly from middle school, through high school, to undergraduate and graduate training.

Each historical thinking concept asks us to come to grips with a problem:

- From the entire human past, what is worth learning about? The problem of historical significance.
- How do we know what we know; how can we use the traces, the leftovers, of the past to support claims about what happened? The problem of evidence.
- How are historical changes interwoven with continuities? The problem of continuity and change.
- What are the layers of cause that led, over time, to any particular event? What are the consequences that rippled out afterwards? The problems of cause and consequence.
- What was it like to live in times so different from our own; can we truly understand? The problem of historical perspective-taking.
- And finally, how can we, in the present, judge actors in different circumstances in the past; when and how do crimes and sacrifices of the past bear consequences today; and what obligations do we have today in relation to those consequences? The ethical dimension of history.

What do powerful understandings of the concepts enable students—and historians—to do? Below are brief summaries.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Explain the historical significance of a particular event, person, or development, linking them to larger, meaningful narratives, using appropriate criteria:

Did it result in important change (on the basis of profundity, quantity, durability)?

Does it offer insights on issues of contemporary concern?

2. Identify how significance is constructed in history books or other historical accounts.
3. Explain how significance can change over time and may vary depending on the perspective of different groups.

**EVIDENCE**

1. Understand how history is an interpretation based on inferences from primary sources; understands that traces, relics and records (primary sources) are not necessarily accounts.
2. Ask questions that turn primary sources into evidence for an inquiry, argument or account.
3. Read sources in view of the conditions and worldviews at the time when it was created.
4. Infer the purposes of sources' authors/creators.
5. Validate inferences from a single source with inferences from other sources (primary and secondary).

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

1. See change in the past as a process, with varying paces and patterns (with continuity at one end of a continuum; turning points at the other)
2. Identify complex patterns of progress and decline, with differing impacts on different peoples. (Progress for some is not necessarily progress for all.)
3. Understand periodization as interpretation. (How history is organized depends upon the scale, questions and assumptions of the historians).

**CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE**

1. Recognize multiple causes and consequences both short and long term.
2. See the interplay of human actions and ongoing structures and conditions.
3. Understand the openness of human choice and chance in the past (as in the present).

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE-TAKING**

1. Recognize the depths of difference between current beliefs, values and motivations (worldviews) and those of earlier peoples.
2. Explain the perspectives of people in the past in their historical context (see Evidence #3).
3. Make factually accurate, evidence-based interpretations of the beliefs, values and motivations of people in the past, but recognize limitations of our understanding.
4. Distinguish various perspectives among historical actors.

**THE ETHICAL DIMENSION OF HISTORY**

1. Recognize implicit and/or explicit ethical stances in historical narratives in a variety of media (e.g., film, museum exhibits, books).
2. Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions of people in the past, recognizing the historical context in which they were operating.
3. Assess fairly the implications for today of sacrifices and injustices in the past.
4. Use historical accounts to inform judgments and action on current issues, recognizing the limitations of any direct "lessons" from the past

# APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

## for Provincial/Territorial Historical Thinking Projects

The purpose of this program is to encourage partnerships within provinces and territories to promote historical thinking in schools and other educational settings.

Successful applications entitle the applicants to use the logo and name [Province] Historical Thinking Project, and be listed on [www.historicalthinking.ca](http://www.historicalthinking.ca) as a provincial/territorial project. Successful applicants will be expected to submit annual activity and financial reports for the past year, and projections for the coming year as part of a renewal process. Applications may be sent to the Steering Committee, c/o Peter Seixas ([peter.seixas@ubc.ca](mailto:peter.seixas@ubc.ca)) at any time with the following information:

### APPLICATION INFORMATION:

- a) Province
- b) Contact person (name and contact information)
- c) Partners (organizations and/or individuals, with professional affiliations and contact information)
- d) Governance structure (describe an executive committee and its relationship to the partners)
- e) Action plan (what activities are planned to be undertaken in the first year, including people responsible for each activity)
- f) Budget (including sources of funding)

### CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL:

- a) Experienced and knowledgeable leadership.
- b) A cross-section of provincial stake-holders in history education (e.g., individuals from ministries, districts, teachers' associations, museums, historical societies, universities).
- c) A well-articulated and workable action plan.
- d) A clear and workable budget.

Most of my students come from countries where the only history education they receive is in the form of propaganda and rote learning. They often struggle with the sheer audacity of independent research and with formulating their own interpretation of events. They come in expecting me to tell them what to think, and what to believe. Many times I have had students practically begging me to just tell them what to write on their essays. What do you want me to say? Gradually they see that they are truly encouraged to think, analyze and interpret historical events, using *The Big Six*, of course. You can see the chains gradually slackening as they come to realize the level of academic and intellectual freedom they enjoy here in Canada. Freedom of thought — what a concept!

**THE HISTORICAL THINKING PROJECT  
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## THE Historical Thinking PROJECT

*Promoting critical historical literacy for the 21st century*

### **DR. PETER SEIXAS, DIRECTOR**

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