

HISTORY EDUCATION DEBATES: CANADIAN IDENTITY, HISTORICAL THINKING AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

DEBATES SOBRE ENSEÑANZA DE LA HISTORIA: IDENTIDAD CANADIENSE, PENSAMIENTO HISTÓRICO Y CONCIENCIA HISTÓRICA

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ABSTRACT: This article sets Canadian historical and current debates about national history and history education into the complicated scenario of Canada's thirteen educational jurisdictions. It looks at debates in the past about the content of history courses and textbooks, as well as approaches to the teaching of history in schools. It discusses the ways in which a historical thinking approach to history education is thriving across the country in the present period, with increased attention to history education research and its dissemination, and an increased presence in provincial curricula. It considers the role in these changes of the federal government, nonprofit private organizations, and national government-funded projects, such as The Historical Thinking Project and The History Education Network.

KEYWORDS: Canadian national identity; historical thinking concepts; history education debates; historical consciousness.

RESUMEN: Este artículo profundiza en los debates históricos y actuales en Canadá sobre la historia nacional y la enseñanza de la historia en el complicado escenario de trece jurisdicciones educativas de Canadá. En este trabajo se analizan los debates sobre los contenidos en la enseñanza de la historia y en los libros de texto, así como los enfoques en la escuela. Se analizan las formas en que un enfoque de pensamiento histórico está consolidándose en todo el país en el período actual, con una mayor atención a la investigación en la enseñanza de la historia y su difusión y su mayor presencia en los planes provinciales. Se considera el papel del gobierno federal en estos cambios, las organizaciones privadas sin fines de lucro, y los proyectos financiados por el gobierno nacional, tales como el *Historical Thinking Project* y *The History Education Network*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Identidad nacional canadiense; conceptos de pensamiento histórico; debates educativos sobre historia; conciencia histórica.

DEBATES ABOUT HISTORY AND IDENTITY

This article was written in the days preceding and following February 15, 2015, the 50th anniversary of the adoption of Canada's official flag. It may seem surprising to readers from more established nations, but Canada was not in possession of its own flag until 1965, almost 100 years after its confederation in 1867. Canada began as a colony of Great Britain and the flag debates centered on the issue of whether to keep the Red Ensign, which incorporated the British Union Jack, or adopt a flag entirely of Canadian origin. Many English-Canadians, including war veterans' organizations and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), argued vociferously that the adoption of the red maple leaf flag was a rejection of Canada's allegiance to the mother country.¹ French-Canadians, in contrast, were largely ambivalent. Liberal Prime Minister Lester Pearson argued that the maple leaf would symbolize the new Canada, with one-quarter of its nearly 20 million population being descendants of French Canadian founders and another quarter immigrants from nations with neither British nor French heritage. The passionate debates surrounding the decision to adopt a new flag (and the much later decision to replace "God Save the Queen" with "O Canada" as the country's national anthem) highlighted many of the questions related to national identity which have beset the nation: What is the place of national symbols in a divided nation? What do our national symbols say about us? How do immigrants fit within a nation that already has competing allegiances? What is the role of the two founding nations with regard to Canadian identity? To what degree should we consult history in order to help inform contemporary decisions?²

DEBATES ABOUT HISTORY AND HISTORY EDUCATION

In the collection *Contemporary Public Debates over History Education* (Nakou and Barca, 2010), the editors classify international debates over history education into three categories: smooth, moderate, and passionate. Debates in Canada appear in the smooth category, although a debate over the current curriculum in the predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec was deemed to be passionate (Cardin, 2010). Debates in the province of Quebec have been more passionate because history there is so intricately tied to assertion of identity. After all, Quebec's motto, inscribed on every vehicle license plate, is "Je me souviens," although what precisely Quebecers are intended to remember has prompted much debate in itself. The 'national history' taught in Quebec is a

history of the Quebecois 'nation' first, set within the larger context of the Canadian confederation. Debates in English-speaking Canada, although they are indeed passionate at times, tend to exhibit less longevity. It may be that there is thought to be less at stake.

Debates in English Canada have generally not been as "smooth" as characterized in *Debates*, although the establishment of the "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking" Project, discussed in this chapter, was smoother than most (Seixas, 2010). Perhaps Canada's debates have not been as warlike as those in other national contexts (Clark, A., 2009).³ However, whether wars or debates, history and history education have certainly encountered challenges.

DEBATES IN DIFFERENT ARENAS

Contention in the public domain has centered on museum exhibitions (Conrad, 2008; MacMillan, 2008), commemorations and memorials (Seixas and Clark, 2004) and filmic portrayals (Smith, 2006; Waiser, 9 March, 2006). In the domain of academia, debate has focused on whether political, military, or social history should provide the predominant framework for historical accounts (Bliss, 1991-92; Dummitt, 2009; Granatstein; 1998). In education, curriculum (Cardin, 2010; Éthier and Lefrançois, 2011; Granatstein, 1998; Létourneau, 2011; Neatby, 1953; Osborne, 2000; Osborne, 2003; Osborne, 2004; Osborne, 2006; Osborne, 2011) and textbooks (Conrad and Finkel, 2003; Clark, 2006; Clark, 2008; Clark, 2009; Clark, 2014; Helyar, 2014; Humphries, 1968) have been at the center of the storms.

The controversies that have swirled around textbooks have been about as contentious as it gets in this country. As social studies educator Geoffrey Milburn put it in 1972, "Almost every aspect of history teaching has been attacked. Sending textbooks scuttling for cover is a seasonal occupation among critics" (p. 122). By the late 1960s, there was deep concern about how Canadians were representing themselves in school history in general and their history textbooks in particular. There was a need to respond to the increasingly multicultural nature of Canadian society, the rise of second-wave feminism, and Aboriginal activism, as well as French/English dualism and the growing threat of Quebec nationalism to Canadian unity. There was a deluge of textbook analyses during the 1970s, conducted by provincial departments of education and human rights commissions, women's and Aboriginal organizations, and national royal commissions.

There were three key studies in 1970 and 1971, each representing a separate area of concern. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism found stark differences between the Canadian history textbooks used in Quebec and those authorized in English-speaking Canada. English and French-language texts focused on different eras in Canadian history. The authors found that after the British Conquest of 1760 the texts did “not even seem to be talking about the same country! The English-speaking authors do their best to give an overall history of Canada, while the French authors. . . . hardly talk about anything but the history of Quebec and its expansion beyond its borders” (Trudel and Jain, 1970, p. 124). The survival of French culture and religion and the Roman Catholic Church, prominent themes in the French-language texts, received little attention in the English-language texts. The *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* concluded that women’s roles were not represented fairly or accurately in elementary school textbooks (Bird *et al.*, 1970, p. 175). *Teaching Prejudice* (McDiarmid and Pratt, 1971) was sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Garnet McDiarmid, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and his graduate student, David Pratt, after examination of 143 history textbooks authorized in Ontario, concluded that “we are most likely to encounter in textbooks devoted Christians, great Jews, hardworking immigrants, infidel Moslems, primitive Negroes, and savage Indians” (p. 45).

There were many studies that examined depictions of Aboriginal people. *The Shocking Truth About Indians in Textbooks*, a 1977 study by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, sadly concluded that, “the main failure of the textbooks under review is their tendency to treat the Native as an impediment to be removed so that the goals of European ‘progress’ can be realized” (p. iii). Other studies found errors of fact, glaring omissions and negative stereotyping (Paton and Deverell, 1974; Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, 1974). Alberta’s 1981 *Native People in the Curriculum*, a study of 264 social studies textbooks used in that province, reported that, “63% of all materials which dealt with native issues were found to be either seriously problematic or completely unacceptable” (Decore *et al.*, 1981, p. 2). As a result of this study, a number of texts were removed from authorized lists.

Textbooks used at the post-secondary level have also been criticized for racism (Stanley, 2000), but discussion has mostly centered on the degree to which

political and military events should constitute the framework around which the text is built. The question is: What do students in an undergraduate history survey course need to know? Textbook authors Conrad and Finkel (2003) ask: “How far could historians go in revealing the warts on our national past without compromising national unity? Should they worry about such unity in the first place? Did they have the right to suggest that the so-called ‘losers’ in the human struggle for power and dominance deserved equal time with the ‘winners’” (p. 13)? The textbooks used in post-secondary courses are less controversial than those used in elementary and secondary schools for several reasons. First, their student readers are older and presumably have a greater ability to think critically about textbook content. Second, post-secondary instructors have autonomy over textbook choice because there is no official authorization process as there is for texts used in schools. Third, taking a history course in post-secondary is more a matter of individual student choice than in secondary. Finally, textbooks are often a less central part of a history course at post-secondary, where lectures are typically of equal or greater importance.

The decade of the 1990s was the nadir of history education in Canada. In 1996, Ken Osborne, a prominent historian and history education scholar, captured the zeitgeist when he warned that in his province of Manitoba, “social studies, history, geography, and the arts and humanities in general, are ignored or downgraded” (p. 28). He continued on to say that this was neither “an aberration nor an accident. It is part of a wider move to sweep the very idea of democratic citizenship aside” (p. 30).

The Dominion Institute added to the acrimony of the debates. It was established as a charitable organization in 1997, with a mandate to promote history and citizenship goals in curricula. Its surveys “chronicled a national malaise about our past. These surveys point to a troubling ignorance about our country’s history, particularly among young Canadians.” Eighty-two percent of young Canadians aged 18 to 24, failed a 1997 test of Canadian history knowledge. For example, fewer than half (46%) could name Canada’s first prime minister and only one-quarter (26%) knew the year of Canada’s Confederation. The Dominion Institute got off to a rocky start because its negative, publicity-mongering approach alienated history educators at every level. The organization seemed to have nothing to offer but criticism. A low point was its publication in 2009 of a “report card” which rated each province’s

history or social studies courses. However, its 2009 merger with Historica, another public history organization which has taken a more positive approach, organizing summer institutes for teachers and offering the Historica minutes (originally funded by the Bronfmann Foundation), brief video segments dramatizing particular historical events and people, signaled an encouraging shift in direction. At this time, the joint organization has a number of useful and popular programs, including the Historica Minutes. Now known as Historica Canada, the organization is described on its website as, “the largest independent organization devoted to enhancing awareness of Canadian history and citizenship.”

Controversy erupted full force in 1998 with the publication of the provocatively titled *Who Killed Canadian History?* In it, historian J.L. Granatstein criticized both history and history education. He blamed historians for their narrow research interests, which sundered the traditional national narrative. He blamed provincial/territorial curriculum policymakers for choosing social studies instead of history courses and interest groups for lobbying for inclusion of their own interests. In his view, the history that did manage to make its way into the school curriculum represented “the grievors among us” (p. xiii), with the result that students were left with very skewed understandings of our past. Perhaps it was timing, because the book appeared shortly after a Quebec referendum in which voters decided by a very narrow margin to stay within the Canadian Confederation. Perhaps it was the widespread blaming that sparked the backlash, but the book ignited a storm among historians, educators, and the public at large. In response, a number of historians proudly declared themselves to be “killers” of Canadian history and argued articulately as to why it was necessary to “kill” the narrow and exclusive nation-building narrative (Stanley, 2000). Others, such as Desmond Morton (1999), pondered the question, “If [history] is dead, why does it look so lively?” At the very least, people’s attention was focused on school history.

DEBATES ABOUT APPROACHES TO HISTORY EDUCATION

Canadian history education has been characterized by four distinctly different aims over time, each of which has competed for space in the curriculum. There is a chronological component in that each of the first three has enjoyed a period of greater prominence and then lost ground. This is not to suggest, however, that any of these has disappeared entirely. Each remains evident to varying degrees.

Nation-building Approach

The first aim is a nation-building one. It is based on familiar themes such as exploration, taming the wilderness, settlement and colonization, the conquest of Quebec, establishment of responsible government, creation of a new nation from sea to sea, valour in war, and increasing independence from Great Britain; all built around a central notion of progress. This aim has been evident in textbooks with titles like *Building the Canadian Nation* (1942) and *Bold Ventures* (1962). The intention is to build students’ sense of identity with their nation at least partly through pride in its accomplishments. Although much denigrated, it is hard to imagine a history program without this aim as an element. Although this approach is characterized by textbook and lecture-based instruction, there is no particular reason why these pedagogical strategies need to be so prominent. Furthermore, its identity aims need not overshadow an understanding that history is not the past, rather it is a construction based on available evidence and historians’ interpretation of that evidence. As historian Desmond Morton (2003) has put it, “when historians claim God’s right of the last word, we shall be destroyed, like any other graven image that claims to be truth and succeeds barely to be a human fantasy” (p. 55).

Evidence indicates that this approach has been the dominant one in classrooms over time. A series of studies of classrooms and textbook use from the 1920s through to the 1960s found a nation-building approach, delivered by teacher lecture, student memorization of information about politics and wars, and general disinterest on the part of students (Katz, 1953; National Council of Education, 1923; Sage, 1930). Two major studies in the 1960s found a continuation of the heavy emphasis on memorization of information delivered by means of textbooks and teacher lectures. The National History Project report, *What Culture? What Heritage?*, is the only pan-Canadian investigation ever conducted in Canada. The study referred to students as “bench-bound listeners” (Hodgetts, 1968, p. 45), pointing out that a nation-building narrative was being transmitted through textbook and lecture-based instruction. It concluded that: “We are teaching a bland, unrealistic consensus version of our past: a dry-as-dust chronological story of uninterrupted political and economic progress told without the controversy that is an inherent part of history” (p. 24). The Parent Commission (Parent and Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec, 1963-1967) in Quebec criticized these approaches

and called for teachers to teach students how to think for themselves. Several recent studies in Quebec suggest that little has changed (Charland, Éthier, Cardin, and Moisan, 2010; Charland and Moisan, 2003; Martineau, 1999). As history educator Ken Osborne (2004) has observed, although we have long known about best practices in history education, we have had difficulty implementing them in the classroom. He has pointed to the “unsatisfactory state of history teaching in Canada stretching back almost a hundred years” (np).

“Structure of the Disciplines” Approach

The aim of “structure of the disciplines,” an approach that became evident in the 1960s, was to give students “an understanding of the fundamental structure” (Bruner, 1960, p. 11) of history, namely its key concepts and modes of inquiry. Pedagogy was based in “discovery learning,” which viewed students as mini-historians, investigating primary source documents and drawing inferences, in order to write their own accounts, rather than relying on accounts already written by historians. Typical textbooks were collections of primary source document excerpts, such as *Canadian History in Documents, 1763-1966* (1966) and *Footprints in Time: A Sourcebook for Canadian History for Young People* (1962). Jackdaws, which were packaged collections of actual documents on particular topics, were also authorized. There is little evidence that this approach ever became common in Canada. However, we know it was implemented to some degree through the existence of source-based school textbooks such as those mentioned here. It was also taught in history and social studies teacher preparation courses that used textbooks such as Evelyn Moore and Edward Owen’s *Teaching the Subjects in the Social Studies* (1966). In spite of the fact that this movement came and went without a great deal of notice in Canada, lingering elements such as use of primary sources and discovery learning helped to pave the way for the positive reception of the historical thinking approach discussed below.

Contemporary Issues Approach

The third dominant approach is not actually an approach to history, since it was essentially anti-history. This change had several sources, including two provincial government royal commissions that were particularly influential. These were the 1968 Hall-Dennis Report in Ontario and the 1972 Worth Commission in Alberta, both of which called for a neo-progressive curriculum orientation. Interestingly, Jerome Bruner was

influential in this regard. In 1971 he called for “a moratorium” on the structure of the disciplines approach, to be replaced by a focus on the contemporary issues of concern to Americans. Bruner’s comments and other influences resulted in a backlash against this movement in the United States. Social studies and history curriculum scholars there criticized it for its academic orientation and its distance from the contemporary problems that confronted that nation in the period.⁴ In Canada, the province of Alberta implemented this approach the most enthusiastically with a mandatory social studies curriculum in the 1980s that was entirely issue-based. The definition of social studies provided in the curriculum guide captures this intention very clearly: “Social Studies is the school subject where students learn to explore and, where possible, to resolve, social issues that are of public and personal concern” (Alberta Education, 1981, p. 1). Classroom resources using this approach included titles such as the *Canadian Critical Issues Series* (1972-1981), developed at the University of British Columbia and the *Public Issues in Canada: Possibilities for Classroom Teaching* (1984-1988) developed at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Both sets consisted of a teacher guide and student booklets that examined a range of current social and political issues, including free trade, women’s roles, labour relations, and multiculturalism. The central point regarding history is that it was important only as it was deemed useful to help students arrive at well-informed positions regarding contemporary issues. Again, curriculum documents and authorized textbooks provide evidence that this approach was implemented to a degree.

Historical Thinking Approach

The fourth approach, historical thinking, was first articulated by Peter Seixas, later a Canada Research Chair at the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, the University of British Columbia in “Conceptualizing the Growth of Historical Understanding,” a chapter in the 1996 *Handbook of Education and Human Development*. This work has its roots primarily in the work of British researchers such as Denis Shemilt (1980), Christopher Portal (1987), and Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby (2000), but also American Jerome Bruner (1960). The concepts have been refined since his initial conceptualization (Seixas, 1996; Seixas, 2006; Seixas, 2010; Seixas and Morton, 2013). Although this approach, like the others, has an ultimate goal of creating worthy citizens who will take citizenship responsibilities seriously, its emphasis is more academic. It sees history as a form of intellec-

tual training, or disciplined inquiry. It retains significant elements of “structure of the disciplines,” with its emphasis on having students engage directly with historical traces, making their own interpretations, and creating their own accounts.⁵

Seixas argues against the nation-building narrative as the sole basis of the history curriculum, pointing to the necessity of a multiplicity of narratives in a complex nation such as Canada. “Merely learning one story would be inadequate preparation: [children] would either have to cleave to it on the basis of faith, or be tossed into a sea of relativistic bewilderment without a paddle. Understanding the nature of historical interpretation and the use of evidence – being able to think historically – would provide a starting point” (2010, p. 20).

Seixas began The Historical Thinking Project (originally called Benchmarks of Historical Thinking) in 2006. Although the term historical consciousness has not found its way into curriculum documents or authorized textbooks in Canada; historical thinking is everywhere. There has not been a new social studies or history curriculum during the past five years which does not incorporate at least some aspects of this approach. The most recent *Report of the Historical Thinking Project* predicts that, “over half of the English-speaking teachers and school children in the country will be working with historical thinking concepts over the next decade” (Seixas and Colyer, 2014, p. 9).

The project held a series of national meetings that brought together provincial curriculum developers, textbook publishers, history education scholars, historians, and classroom teachers to engage with the concepts and strategize as to how to get them into classrooms. It has connected with teachers in a number of ways, including development of lesson plans made available on the project website and provision of summer institutes and professional development workshops. Major publishers McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Nelson Education, and Pearson Canada have produced Canadian history textbooks that incorporate historical thinking. The project has also produced *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Seixas and Morton, 2013), for use in both pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development programs.⁶

Below is an explication of each of the six historical thinking concepts:

- **How Do We Decide What is Important to Learn about the Past?** Historians **establish historical significance** We can’t know all of the past—

there is simply too much there. . . . particular facts become significant when we see them as part of a larger narrative that is relevant to important issues that concern us today.

- **How Do We Know What We Know about the Past?** Historians **use primary source evidence**. Ultimately the foundations for all claims in history are the traces left over from the times in which past events occurred. . . . Making a historical claim that others can justifiably believe, then, requires finding, selecting, contextualizing, interpreting, and corroborating sources for an historical argument.
- **How Can We Make Sense of the Complex Flows of History?** Historians **examine continuity and change**. . . . some things don’t change at all; some things change quickly and then slowly, and, at any given moment, some things change while others remain the same. Sensitivity to all of these aspects of continuity and change is crucial to narrating history.
- **Why Do Events Happen, and What Are Their Impacts?** Historians **analyze cause and consequence**. Without a sense of causation, sets of events—even if organized chronologically—become mere disconnected lists. We can trace the short-term and long-term consequences that result from virtually any event.
- **How Can We Better Understand the People of the Past?** Historians **take historical perspectives**. . . . We can attempt to see through the eyes of the people of the past by making evidence-based inferences about what they thought and believed. Yet we examine the past through our own present-day lenses, with concerns and questions that arise from the present. Can we avoid “presentism,” the imposition of the present on the past?
- **How Can History Help Us to Live in the Present?** Historians attempt to **understand the ethical dimension of history**. . . . How should we judge historical actors? What are the implications for us, today, of the horrors and heroisms of the past? How can we use the study of the past to inform judgments and actions on controversial issues in the present? (Seixas and Morton, 2013, pp. 5-6).

Increasingly, attention has turned to the idea of progression in terms of students’ historical understand-

ings, accompanied by assessment of that progression. Seixas (2011) posits a model of progression consistent with contemporary learning research:

First, new understandings are constructed on the foundations of existing knowledge and experience. Second, there can be progression . . . as [students] develop increasingly sophisticated and powerful concepts and procedures for developing their understandings. But there is no single linear path of progression. . . . Third . . . progression, while potentially subject to age-related limits, can be actively promoted and enhanced by teaching in the zone of proximal development – that is, not so far away from students' current understanding that it leaves them behind, but far enough away that it stimulates growth (p. 143).

The question of how to go about measuring students' progression in terms of competence in using historical thinking concepts is central. Seixas (2011) has identified some key conclusions from nascent work on student assessment: 1. The more conversant students are with contextual information, the better they will be as historical thinkers. 2. Assessment tasks should contribute to the learning process and not simply assess what students have already learned. 3. As students begin to see a procedural consistency they will become increasingly comfortable with increasingly complex forms of the historical thinking concepts. 4. Teachers will enrich their understanding of historical thinking concepts as they analyze students' work and make decisions about the quality of the student work. They will bring these enriched understandings back to their teaching (pp. 151-2).

Unlike the United States, which "is in the midst of a testing gold rush" (Smith and Breakstone, 2015, p. 233), there has been little attention in Canada to development of large-scale measures of students' ability to think historically. Given that, as Smith and Breakstone point out, assessment has a way of shaping instruction, it follows that if historical thinking is to become part of classroom practice, we have to pay attention to assessment. A recent volume edited by Kadriye Ercikan and Peter Seixas (2015) brings together international research and practice concerning assessment of students' historical thinking and historical consciousness. This publication represents a significant step toward construction of effective assessments. One important finding is that "MC [multiple choice] items lend less persuasive measures of HT than do CK [constructed response] tasks" (p. 252). More importantly, the book explicates the immense amount of work ahead. British researcher Denis Shemilt identifies the

challenge of locating boundaries between assessment of historical thinking, knowledge of course content, general intelligence, literacy, and data-handling skills. He also notes that the important questions of validity and reliability of test items require extensive and focused attention.

DEBATES ABOUT HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In Germany, historical consciousness is "widely discussed in academia, but [it] also has left deep footprints in educational practice" (Köbl and Konrad, 2015, p. 17). Neither is the case in Canada.⁷ The concept first appeared in English Canada at a 2001 international conference that marked the establishment of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at UBC and resulted in the 2004 publication, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, the first Canadian book publication on the topic. The book took its definition of the term from German philosopher, Jörn Rüsen, a participant in the conference and book contributor. According to Rüsen, "history is the mirror of past actuality into which the present peers in order to learn something about its future. Historical consciousness . . . render[s] present actuality intelligible while fashioning its future perspectives" (p. 67).

The concept has garnered greater interest in Quebec than in English-speaking provinces, perhaps due to that province's closer ties to Europe. Quebec researcher Catherine Duquette (2015) has investigated the relationship between historical consciousness and historical thinking, using both a theoretical analysis and an empirically based assessment. She administered a complex four-stage assessment of historical thinking to 148 Quebec students in their final year of secondary school. She began with Rüsen's model of historical consciousness, but did not find it useful for measuring progression in historical consciousness. Using a four-tiered model she developed, she found that growth in historical consciousness and growth in historical thinking progressed in tandem. This study makes a significant contribution to the literature for two reasons: 1. It tests Rüsen's model empirically. 2. It suggests that it is reasonable to see students' level of historical consciousness as an indicator of their ability to think historically. Given that history assessments that do not rely on specific content knowledge are rare, Duquette's model could serve as an exemplar for future assessments of students' historical thinking.

Michael Marker (2011) has identified indigenous historical consciousness as an area needing greater attention. He identifies "four themes of indigenous his-

torical consciousness that travel outside of ways that history courses are constructed and taught” (p. 97). These are 1. a circular concept of time versus a linear one, a view that contradicts the Eurocentric sense of progression of people and ideas in time; 2. a view of plants and animals as being unsegmented from humans. This differs from the economic context in which they are presented in Canadian history textbooks – a context that presents them as economic commodities in resource industries such as the fur trade; 3. indigenous attention to local concerns and the relationship between these concerns and concepts of protection of traditional territory and land claims; 4. colonization, including misunderstandings originating in contrasting worldviews. Marker has urged that these indigenous perspectives be incorporated in curricula and textbooks so that indigenous students are not alienated from the official curriculum.

Peter Seixas (2012) has pointed to the significant degree to which these characteristics of indigenous ways of understanding the past pose difficulties for Western historiographies. There is not sufficient space to deal with these ideas here, but perhaps most notable is that this notion of historical consciousness allows no room for teaching students to “assess the significance of stories, how to analyze the evidence behind stories, how to relate micro-stories to larger pictures of historical development, and how to unearth stories’ underlying structures and implicit ethical messages,” (p. 135), all of which are central to a critical disciplinary approach to history education. The authority of authors demands a critical stance. “There is little room for exclusive claims to insular knowledge” (p. 136). He observes that if indigenous ways of knowing can form the basis for historical narratives, then “who will be able to object to histories based on Islamic cosmology, Biblical fundamentalism and Haitian voodoo?” (p. 136). This is the beginning of troubling, but necessary, dialogues that need to take place as we consider the nature of knowledge and the place of different views of historical consciousness. This particular discussion may be unique to Canada.

FRACTURED FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL JURISDICTIONS: A COMPLICATED SCENARIO

In the absence of a national history curriculum and the presence of 13 separate educational jurisdictions (ten provinces and three territories), each with its own curriculum mandate, generalizations about education often must be qualified. While there have been attempts from time to time to unite several provinces in

a joint curriculum endeavour, these have been limited in scope and in some cases quietly abandoned after significant time, effort and financial outlay. One complication is that many provinces and territories have chosen to eschew history for the interdisciplinary subject of social studies, which encompasses history, but also geography and a smattering of other social science disciplines. There is a range of responses to the history/social studies dilemma across jurisdictions and the content and approach of social studies courses vary considerably across the country (Shields and Ramsey, 2002; Shields and Ramsey, 2004). Only Alberta has a mandatory social studies curriculum for all grades. Ontario offers social studies at the elementary grades and history at secondary. Quebec has a History and Citizenship curriculum. Other provinces offer social studies courses, with electives that include history and geography. Only four provinces require that students take a separate course in Canadian history in secondary school. The territories rely predominantly on particular provincial curricula, although they have their own curricula as well.⁸

There have been calls for a national history curriculum accompanied by national textbooks since the late 19th Century. At that time, the Dominion Education Association, provincial teachers’ associations, and provincial governments sponsored a contest for a history textbook that would be acceptable across the country. The winner, *The History of the Dominion of Canada*, declared that it was intended to “unite the various currents of provincial history into the broader channel of the Dominion” (Clement, 1897, v-vi). In the end the book was authorized in only four provinces, the others apparently resisting this effort to direct them into “the broader channel of the Dominion.” Trudel and Jain (1970), in their Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Report, recommended that a national history textbook be developed by a collaborative team of French-and-English-speaking historians. This project was not carried out.

More recently, in a 2007 presentation to the National Forum on Canadian History, sponsored by Canada’s National History Society, historian and history educator Ruth Sandwell made a passionate plea for what she called, a “model history curriculum.” Her rationale was: “The work of historians, history educators and teachers from across the country, as well as those from our own province, territory or region, can provide a better foundation for understanding our role in this participatory, pluralist democracy than one based only on those coming from our own province”.

Sandwell stopped short of calling for one national curriculum, instead, proposing that a model be developed from which the provinces/territories could draw for their own purposes. She noted that a model curriculum would include generalizations about Canadian history, while also recognizing “what Jocelyn Létourneau has called the ‘dissonance and fragmentation’ that lies at the heart of Canadian history”. She also noted that the curriculum should not be solely about knowledge, but should incorporate effective teaching practices intended to lead to increased historical understandings.

Teachers of social studies and history in K-12 schools have provincial organizations, with professional journals and annual conferences, but there is no national organization.⁹ History education scholars have no national organization, national journal, or national conference, therefore lacking a formal forum for dissemination of research, scholarly critique, and exchange of ideas.¹⁰ Academic historians do have a national organization, the Canadian Historical Association, which provides a journal and an annual forum for presentation and discussion of papers and also acts as an advocacy group. However, there are yawning communication gaps between historians and history education scholars in faculties of education, and between both groups and teachers at the Kindergarten to grade twelve levels, which makes dissemination of research findings challenging (Sandwell, 2005).

There are a number of private nonprofit national organizations in Canada that work to influence history education across provincial/territorial boundaries, often with a mandate to influence the public-at-large as well. They include Historica Canada and Canada’s National History Society (now called Canada’s History), mentioned previously, and The Association For Canadian Studies. They obtain funding in a variety of ways, including individual donations, endowments, magazine subscriptions, and federal government grants. Their approaches to history education vary, but a nation-building mandate is more the norm than not.¹¹ Contributions made by these organizations are primarily in the areas of offering conferences for history educators, conducting surveys, recognizing excellent teachers, and promoting student engagement with historical topics through essay contests, excursions, and teaching resources. It seems that private initiatives are becoming more influential on history curriculum and classroom practice over time, but we do not have empirical evidence regarding their impact. This is an area for future research.

Although the Canadian federal government does not have a formal educational mandate, it often enters the educational conversation by the back door, so to speak. This occurs by means of resources supplied through federal entities such as the National Film Board of Canada, funding for nonprofit organizations such as Canada’s History and Historica Canada, provision of funds to commemorate historically significant events, including the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, the 150th anniversary of Confederation, and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War One (in which Canada had significant involvement), and school materials developed to support these commemorative activities.

The federal government also exercises influence through its distribution of research funds; providing grants that have supported both new research and dissemination of research findings through means that may ultimately influence classroom practice at all levels. The Historical Thinking Project was one such project. Since the mid-2000s, the government has encouraged research dissemination through its Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grants. One of these has supported The History Education Network/Histoire et éducation en réseau (THEN/HiER) over an eight-year period from 2008 to 2016, under the leadership of Penney Clark at the University of British Columbia.¹² THEN/HiER has held symposia that have provided opportunities for scholars to share their research findings about how teachers teach and students learn history, organized workshops for teachers, and supported the development of innovative educational resources. Its website at www.thenhier.ca provides a crucial clearinghouse for research findings and opportunities to engage in debates about applications of these findings.

The Network’s series of five scholarly edited books is unique in the history of Canadian history education and could only have been developed by means of sustained funding. *New Possibilities for the Past* (2011) is a broad look at the field, examining the contested terrains of Canadian historiography and debates about history education in English Canada and in Quebec, and the inclusion of indigenous perspectives. It considers implications of research for history learning in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to, schools. *Pastplay* (2014) investigates ways in which technology can enrich history education. *Becoming a History Teacher in Canada* (2014) explores history teacher education. *New Directions in Assessing Historical Thinking* (2015) addresses approaches

to assessment of historical thinking and historical consciousness in various nations. *Museums and the Past* (2016) explores critical public engagement with historical narratives in museums. The sixth book, to be authored, will consider current and potential roles for the arts in history education, as well as ways the arts use history.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The outcome of the debates about history and history education has been increased emphasis on history education and a more nuanced understanding of its purposes in the school curriculum. This increased interest has resulted in support for new ideas about what is important in teaching history. There have been a number of exciting initiatives in history education over the past two decades. There is a thriving history education research community that has managed to connect with Canadian and international historians, teachers, public historians, and museum professionals, to conduct joint research projects, exchange ideas at symposia and conferences, contribute to joint publications, and develop classroom resource materials.

History education research is flourishing, with scholars investigating areas such as the use of technology (e.g., gaming, virtual environments) to teach history, how to build historical thinking into museum exhibitions, how to teach with primary sources, and how to assess student progression in terms of understanding historical thinking concepts (Clark, 2014). Dissemination of research findings is receiving greater attention, as new vehicles for dissemination and critique are explored. What sets Canada apart from European nations is its limited attention to historical consciousness. With the exception of work in Que-

bec, there is no empirical research intended to determine the relationship between historical consciousness and historical thinking.

My co-authors and I ended a recent article with the comment that, "While it is impossible to predict where we will be a decade hence, the prospects [for history education] seem almost limitless" (Clark, Lévesque, and Sandwell, 2015, p. 211). That article was written in 2012, but the prospects remain limitless. Many were discomfited when The Historical Thinking Project's funds were not renewed by Canadian Heritage in March of 2014 and indeed, this was a setback. However, as noted previously, the work of the project has found its way into curricula and authorized textbooks across Canada. Almost every province is implementing some version of historical thinking concepts; moving away from a solely nation-building emphasis to one that promotes understanding that history is constructed and contested. The work of The History Education Network has helped academic historians, history education scholars, public historians, museum professionals, practicing teachers, curriculum developers, and textbook publishers to see where they have common aims and it has provided opportunities for them to collaborate in efforts to attain those aims. The onus is on all of these constituencies to continue to collaborate with others nationally and internationally to develop the best history education possible for Canadian students.

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NOTES

1. The IODE's motto was "One Flag, One Throne, One Empire".
2. Two perennial identity issues missing in the flag debates were Canada's relationship to its powerful neighbour, the United States, and the place of Aboriginal people within the nation.
3. Most of the fourteen Canadian historians and university history educators interviewed by Ruth Sandwell (2012) were reluctant to use the term "his-
4. For criticisms of the "new social studies," as it was known in the United States, see, in particular, various issues in volume 83 of *The Social Studies*.
5. See Stéphane Lévesque (2008) for a detailed explication of the concepts.
6. See www.historicalthinking.ca for annual reports, instructional plans and background papers. I have spoken in the past tense with regard to the Project because its federal funding ran out in March 2014.
7. The difference in emphasis on historical consciousness in North America and Europe is starkly evident in comparisons of the large-scale assessments developed in the United States

with those in Sweden (Ercikan and Seixas, 2015, Part III, "Large-scale assessment of historical thinking").

8. See <http://www.thenhier.ca/en/content/curriculum-documents> for current provincial/territorial curriculum documents.
9. Historian Desmond Morton (2006) has argued for the efficacy of such an

organization to consolidate some of the gains made by history teachers in bringing their subject to prominence.

10. There is a national journal called *Canadian Social Studies*, with limited content and a sporadic publication record.
11. For a discussion of the mechanisms employed by such organizations to

present a glorious, inspiring and sanitized version of Canadian history through educational materials see Alexandre Lanoix (2007).

12. The network was established in 2005, under the leadership of Ruth Sandwell, OISE/University of Toronto; John Lutz, University of Victoria; and Peter Gosage, Université de Sherbrooke.

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