

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Social Studies Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Summer 2024

President's Message



Our collective dedication to education resonates deeply, especially in the context of the ongoing overhaul of Alberta's social studies curriculum, a process poised to shape the educational journey of our students. Social studies transcends mere facts and dates, serving as a vehicle for students to comprehend their place in the world and navigate its complexities.

As the world undergoes rapid transformations fueled by technology, politics and social dynamics, educators bear the responsibility of equipping students with the adaptability and engagement skills crucial for success. Acknowledging the fluidity of

society, we advocate for a curriculum fostering critical thinking, empathy and respect for diverse viewpoints. We continue to urge our government to prepare our students to be informed, motivated contributors to our province and the global community. As educators, we are unwavering in our commitment to educational excellence in Alberta.

Join us at the ATA Social Studies Council Conference in Banff, from October 17th to 19th, 2024, as we explore "Magnifying the Mysteries of Canada's History," with a special focus on Black history in Canada. This year, we extend a warm welcome to Division I and II teachers, offering tailored sessions on themes of fairness, justice, identity and inclusion for younger students. Our program offers a diverse range of sessions for both elementary and secondary educators. We're excited to announce our esteemed keynote speakers, Natasha Henry-Dixon, PhD, guest editor of *Kayak Magazine* and assistant professor at York University, who will shed light on Black Canadian history, and the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, former governor general of Canada and renowned social activist. Additionally, we're honoured to host Kisha Supernant, PhD, director of

the Prairie Institute of Indigenous and Prairie Archaeology, and a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta, who explores community archaeology and heart-centred practices in their research.

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your teaching practice and deepen your understanding of Canada's history against the breathtaking backdrop of Banff.

Shelley Kirkvold

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Past President's Message—Social Studies Educators Network of Canada (SSENC)



Have you checked out SSENC yet? As past president, I continue to contribute to social studies education in Alberta, and one of the ways I do this is through my role as vice president of communications at SSENC.

SSENC’s website is full of ideas and resources for social studies teachers across Canada. SSENC aims to achieve three main objectives:

- To advocate for social studies education across Canada
- To facilitate networking and cooperation among social studies educators across Canada

- To engage with public institutions, private interests and nongovernmental institutions in the development and implementation of policies and/or resources related to social studies education across Canada

Sign up for the newsletter to receive information about events, resources and much more!

Sincerely,

Jenn Williams

Social Studies Educators Network of Canada

Sign up for quarterly newsletter

CHECK IT OUT! SIGN UP NOW!

- **Free resources**
(vetted by Canadian teachers)
- **Articles**
discussing pedagogy/research in social studies

Réseau pour l'enseignement des sciences sociales du Canada

Inscris-toi à notre infolettre !

S'INSCRIRE MAINTENANT!

- **Ressources gratuites**
validées par notre équipe
- **Articles**
portant sur la didactique des sciences sociales

From the Editor



At the end of the school year, I find myself reflecting on how interesting things have been. I have grown in so many ways this year, especially when it comes to diversity and inclusion, and I hope to share my new work and integrate my learning in the realm of social studies.

I have been on the Local 38 Antiracist Teachers' Network

planning committee, and I presented at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention and facilitated breakout discussions at the An Alberta for All symposium. I have also been the cochair of the Local 38 Women in Leadership committee, where I have helped organize events for female leaders (both in and outside the classroom) and aspiring female teachers. I have had the chance to present at the provincial Women in Leadership Summit on authenticity in networking as a leader or teacher. As part of the Provincial Women in Leadership Committee and Women in Leadership Advisory Council, I have contributed to the planning and organizing of the WIL summit this year.

At the end of the day, these are *social* issues. We talk about social justice in social studies. We study the struggles of women in history. We study the struggles of racialized

immigrants (such as Black, Chinese and Ukrainian immigrants) in history. We study and explore Indigenous populations, history and knowledge. In essence, social studies is filled with diversity and inclusion, and rightly so! That is why I'm so pleased that next year's Social Studies Conference highlights diversity! I'm excited about it more than usual because a few of my committee colleagues and I will be among the presenters bringing diversity and social studies together.

I look forward to this conference, and I want to thank our conference director, Natasha Sarkar, and all our committee and council members for helping us plan such an exciting conference for us all. I can't wait to see you all out there in October! Plus, who doesn't love Banff!

Have a great summer,

Sana Waseem

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Contact information for the complete Social Studies Council executive can be found at <https://ssc.teachers.ab.ca/>

Call for Submissions

Interested in writing for
Focus Newsletter?

Perhaps you already have an
amazing article waiting
to be published?

Then we are looking for you!

Contact the editor, Sana Waseem,
at atasscfocus@gmail.com today!

University. She enjoys Edmonton's arts and culture scene and spending time outdoors regardless of the season.

Carla Peck

University Representative



Carla Peck is a professor of social studies education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta and is the director of the

Thinking Historically for Canada's Future SSHRC Partnership Grant (www.thinking-historically.ca). She researches teachers' and students' understandings of democratic concepts and historical understandings, and she is particularly interested in the relationship between students' ethnic identities and their understandings of history. She regularly works with teachers at the provincial, national and international levels and serves as a consultant on numerous boards and advisory groups for history and civic organizations. She has received many grants and awards.

Bryan Burley

Communications Manager



Bryan Burley is in his 27th year of teaching with Red Deer Public Schools. He is a long-time member of the SSC and has served as Central

Alberta Regional president (2000–2008), provincial president (2008–2009) and conference chair (2011). He is now the SSC's communications manager. So many great years working with amazing colleagues across Alberta! He believes that the power of a specialist council to create positive movements

within education is never more important than today. He wants Alberta's education system to be the best in the world as his grandson makes his way through public schools.

Nik Selwood



Northern Alberta Regional President

Nik Selwood has taught in northern Alberta since 2002, after graduating from the University of Alberta with a BA and a BEd. His current assignment is at Charles Spencer High School in Grande Prairie, teaching Grades 9–12 social studies. He has been married for 20 years and has one amazing son. His passion for social studies began at a young age when his Oma travelled with him to Europe a few times. In an age before smartphones, experiencing other parts of the world helped to expand and inspire his worldview. In his earlier years teaching, he was involved with the SSC, but the Northern Alberta Regional became inactive for a while. He has been trying to revive the regional through providing events and resources. You can contact Nik for more information on events in your area or if you have suggestions and ideas.

Orlena Shew

Edmonton Regional President



Orlena Shew has been a teacher with Edmonton Public Schools for over 20 years and is the social studies lead teacher at S Bruce Smith School. She has a BA in history and political science and a BEd in

secondary social studies. She is a lifelong learner, and a highlight of her career was participating in the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy, a week-long trip to Ottawa that allowed her to develop quality resources for all students at her school. She is also the First Nations, Métis and Inuit lead teacher at her school, with the responsibilities of organizing and curating resources to enhance the quality of education in all classrooms and arranging authentic PD experiences for staff throughout the year. She believes in the importance of teaching students to be responsible citizens, and she selects and leads a group of student volunteers to help within the school and the community, including organizing community Halloween parties, food bank drives and school activities. She enjoys travelling and is looking forward to exploring the world again.

Craig Harding

Journal Editor



Craig Harding taught junior high social studies in Calgary for over 30 years and has been active with the SSC for about 25 years. He was the editor of *Focus Newsletter*

for many years and is now the editor of *One World in Dialogue*. Throughout his career, he has had many interesting opportunities, including coauthoring textbooks in Alberta and social studies books used across Canada; being the history education professor on several battlefield studies tours to Europe; and presenting at provincial, national and international conferences. Although he has retired, he has a hard time staying out of the classroom. He now teaches social studies at the University of Alberta and Mount Royal University, courses at Ambrose

University and online graduate classes at the University of New Brunswick. His favourite social studies quote is from Antonio Gramsci: "What comes to pass does so not so much because a few people want it to happen, as because the mass of citizens abdicate their responsibility and let things be."

Jen Perry

Calgary Regional President



Jen Perry began her teaching career over 17 years ago as an elementary teacher. She has worked as an educational technology consultant and is currently an elementary social studies consultant for Calgary Catholic School District. She is a NatGeo certified educator, Google certified educator, a Transatlantic Outreach fellow (2019) and a Teach SDGs ambassador (2020). Jen is currently completing a MEd in sustainability, creativity and innovation. She advocates for student-centred learning through collaborative practices with teachers and students. She enjoys exploring nature with her husband and two sporty teenagers.

Sana Waseem

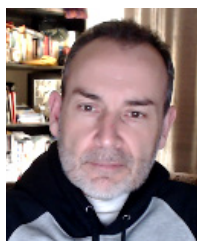
Newsletter Editor



Sana Waseem serves as the Calgary and Area Regional President and the editor of *Focus Newsletter*. Outside of council duties, she is happily employed with the Calgary Board of Education, teaching a variety of subjects. She is passionate about social justice and human rights and helps with her school's equity committee. At the end of the school day, she goes home to her family and rescued dog and tries to make time for herself by reading, knitting, painting, playing games, watching TV, listening to music or hanging out with her family.

Craig Findlay

Southern Alberta Regional President



Craig Findlay is in his 30th year of teaching and has worked in five different school settings, with most of his teaching being in

high school social studies. He feels fortunate to have experienced a variety of professional learning opportunities, including a secondment with the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium, an instructor secondment with the University of Lethbridge's Faculty of Education, and curriculum design and learner assessment work with Alberta Education. He has served in executive roles at the local and provincial levels of the SSC. He has been involved in the ATA's Finland-Alberta partnership, a collaboration between schools in Alberta and Finland to explore the inquiry question, What makes a great school for all? Over the past five years, he has been on a personal and professional journey toward deepening his understanding of traditional Blackfoot ways of knowing, focused on his relationship to the land and stories of the place he calls home.

Thinking Historically Update

Check out the April 2024 edition of *Think History!* by our SSC university liaison, Carla Peck, from the University of Alberta. She has written a thought-provoking piece and has included links to explore further.

You can also use the QR code to scroll the webpage and find more information and news on upcoming events, a researcher snapshot of Gabrielle Weaselhead, research cluster updates and a graduate student corner.



The following excerpts are reprinted with permission from Thinking Historically for Canada's Future. Minor changes have been made to fit ATA style.

Think History!

Welcome to the latest edition of *Think History!*, the newsletter of the Thinking Historically for Canada's Future Research Partnership!

The past few months have been marked by a flurry of knowledge mobilization activities, particularly in the media. In January, the University of Alberta profiled some initial results from our [National Youth Survey](#). This garnered national attention as media outlets in Alberta and across the country sought to learn more. On January 26, Carla Peck did a series of syndication interviews for CBC Radio Stations, criss-crossing the country on the CBC's airwaves: Charlottetown, Halifax, London, Windsor, Toronto, Cape Breton (Sydney), Victoria, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Whitehorse, Quebec City, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Calgary, Yellowknife and Vancouver. Local radio stations in Alberta also picked up the story. You

can find recordings to some of these interviews [here](#).

Members of the Thinking Historically for Canada's Future Graduate Student Committee have written and published several blog posts for a series titled, "Who cares about thinking historically?", generously produced by our partner, [Active History](#). Congratulations to all who have contributed to the blog series—be sure to read and offer comments if the spirit to do so grabs you! You can find all of the blog entries at the link above.

In March, the Alberta Ministry of Education released the latest version of its draft K–6 social studies curriculum. The previous version, released in March 2021, was highly [criticized](#) for being developmentally inappropriate, containing factual errors and racist content, and following a flawed process, among other significant faults. The March 2024 version of the curriculum has not fared well either. *Thinking Historically* members David Scott, James Miles and Carla Peck have provided their expert commentary to media since its release. Scott, who was a member of the Curriculum Specialists Group, which provided expert advice to Alberta Education for the development of the draft curriculum, is one of the authors of an [Open Letter](#) regarding the consultation process and concerns over the content included in the curriculum.

Lastly, Carla was interviewed for a piece in University Affairs titled, "[The ebb of Canada's past](#)", which explores the state of history education, primarily at the post-secondary level. Thomas Peace, a member of our partner Active History, is also quoted in the article.

What's so exciting about all of these knowledge mobilization

activities is that our team is actively shaping public discourse and policy about history education in Canada. When academics contribute to public discourse about societal concerns, we bring valuable insights grounded in research and expertise to issues that are important to our society. This can enrich public understanding of complex issues, leading to more informed decision-making and policy development. Additionally, by engaging in public discourse, we are making our research more accessible and relevant, demonstrating the real-world impact of our work to Canadians.

Members of Thinking Historically for Canada's Future: Have you been engaged in knowledge mobilization that directly relates to the work of Thinking Historically for Canada's Future? If so, please [submit](#) it to our Knowledge Creation Hub. While you're there, [browse](#) through the many different ways Thinking Historically partnership members have been engaging in this important knowledge mobilization work!

Wishing you all a wonderful spring,

Carla L Peck, project director

Penser l'histoire!

Bienvenue au dernier numéro de *Penser l'histoire!*, le bulletin d'information du partenariat de recherche Penser historiquement pour l'avenir du Canada!

Les derniers mois ont été marqués par de nombreuses activités de mobilisation des connaissances, en particulier dans les médias. En janvier, l'Université de l'Alberta a présenté les premiers résultats du [Sondage national auprès des jeunes](#) (en anglais). Cela a attiré l'attention nationale, puisque les médias de l'Alberta et de tout le pays ont

voulu en savoir davantage. Le 26 janvier, Carla Peck a donné une série d'entrevues pour les stations de radio de la Société Radio-Canada (CBC), sillonnant le pays sur les ondes de la CBC : Charlottetown, Halifax, London, Windsor, Toronto, Cape Breton (Sydney), Victoria, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Whitehorse, Québec, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Calgary, Yellowknife et Vancouver. Des stations de radio locales en Alberta ont également couvert le sujet. Vous trouverez les enregistrements de certaines de ces entrevues [ici](#) (la plupart des entretiens sont en anglais, mais cliquez sur "Comment moderniser les cours de l'histoire? *Radio Canada : Le Café Show*" pour écouter un entretien en français).

Les membres du Comité des étudiants diplômés de *Penser historiquement pour l'avenir du Canada* ont rédigé et publié plusieurs billets de blogue dans le cadre d'une série intitulée, « *Who cares about thinking historically?* », généreusement réalisée par notre partenaire, [Active History](#). Félicitations à toutes les personnes qui ont contribué à cette série de blogues – ne manquez pas de les lire et de les commenter si le cœur vous en dit! Vous pouvez trouver tous les billets du blogue au lien ci-dessus.

En mars, le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Alberta a publié la dernière version de son projet de programme d'études sociales pour les élèves de la maternelle à la sixième année. La version précédente, publiée en mars 2021, a fait l'objet de vives [critiques](#) (en anglais), notamment parce qu'elle

n'était pas adaptée au niveau de développement, qu'elle contenait des erreurs factuelles et un contenu raciste et qu'elle suivait un processus erroné, entre autres lacunes importantes. La version de mars 2024 du programme d'études n'a pas été bien accueillie non plus. Les membres de *Penser historiquement*, David Scott, James Miles et Carla Peck, ont fait part de leurs commentaires d'experts aux médias depuis sa publication. M. Scott, membre du groupe de spécialistes du programme d'études qui a donné des conseils d'experts au ministère de l'Éducation de l'Alberta pour l'élaboration du projet de programme d'études, est l'un des auteurs d'une [lettre ouverte](#) (en anglais) concernant le processus de consultation et les préoccupations relatives au contenu du programme d'études.

Enfin, Carla Peck a été interviewée dans le cadre d'un article de la revue *Affaires universitaires* intitulé « [L'histoire canadienne est-elle reléguée aux oubliettes?](#) », qui explore l'état de l'enseignement de l'histoire, principalement au niveau postsecondaire. Thomas Peace, membre de notre partenaire *Active History*, est également cité dans l'article.

Ce qui est particulièrement intéressant dans toutes ces activités de mobilisation des connaissances, c'est que notre équipe participe activement à l'élaboration du discours public et des politiques relatives à l'enseignement de l'histoire au Canada. Lorsque les universitaires contribuent au discours public sur les

préoccupations sociétales, ils apportent des points de vue précieux, fondés sur la recherche et l'expertise, sur des enjeux qui sont importants pour notre société. Le public peut ainsi mieux comprendre des enjeux complexes, ce qui permet de prendre des décisions et d'élaborer des politiques en connaissance de cause. Par ailleurs, en participant au débat public, nous rendons nos recherches plus accessibles et plus pertinentes, ce qui permet de présenter aux Canadiens les répercussions de nos travaux.

Membres de *Penser historiquement pour l'avenir du Canada* : avez-vous participé à la mobilisation de connaissances directement liées aux travaux de *Penser historiquement pour l'avenir du Canada*? Si c'est le cas, veuillez [soumettre](#) votre projet au Centre de création de connaissances. Pendant que vous y êtes, [parcourez](#) les différentes façons dont les membres du partenariat *Penser historiquement* se sont impliqués dans cet important travail de mobilisation des connaissances!

Je vous souhaite à tous un bon printemps!

Carla L. Peck, directrice du projet



Save the Date!

We, the Alberta Teachers' Association Social Studies Council, in the spirit of education on equality and awareness raising, invite you to join us at our fall conference, "Magnifying the Mysteries of Canada's History," with a focus on Black history in Canada.

The conference will be held at the Banff Park Lodge from Thursday, October 17 to Saturday, October 19, 2024. This year, we want to welcome our Division I and II teachers to learn ways to engage younger youth on topics of fairness, justice, identity and inclusion. We have designed a program with offerings for elementary teachers and plenty of sessions for secondary teachers.

We are excited to have as our opening keynote, Natasha Henry-Dixon, PhD, assistant professor at York University and guest editor of *Kayak Magazine*, which focuses on Black history in Canada. Our closing keynote is Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, social activist, journalist, documentary filmmaker, governor general of Canada (2005–2010) and secretary general of the

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (2014–2019). We've brought you the director of the Prairie Institute of Indigenous and Prairie Archaeology, Kisha Supernant, PhD, to speak to community archaeology and heart-centred archaeological practice. Supernant was coeditor on two volumes: *Archaeologies of the Heart* and *Blurring Timescapes, Subverting Erasure: Remembering Ghosts on the Margins of History*.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2015–2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent to "promote a greater knowledge of, and respect for, the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies." The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action is a comprehensive United Nations framework that represents a new stage in the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to restore the rights and dignity of people of African descent. It states that "in the spirit of

education on equality and awareness-raising," we should "Ensure that textbooks and other educational materials reflect historical facts accurately as they relate to past tragedies and atrocities, in particular slavery, the slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, so as to avoid stereotypes and the distortion or falsification of these historical facts, which may lead to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including the role of respective countries therein" (United Nations, nd).

The exciting sessions we've selected will provide educators opportunities to share ideas and gather knowledge on how to engage students on topics that are underrepresented in our program of studies. We will learn about the history of enslavement, the intersections of Black and Indigenous communities, migration patterns beyond Atlantic Canada, Black settlements in the prairies and contemporary history of Black communities in Canada. Our belief is that Black history is Canada's history. Equipping teachers to teach Black history helps us widen our perspectives, authentically appreciate our diversity and understand our history as a community.

Register to attend the SSC 2024 Conference at <https://atassc2024conference.weebly.com>.

We are thrilled to have you join us!

Natasha Sarkar (*shelher*), BA, BEd, MA
Conference Director

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ATASSC CONFERENCE:

MAGNIFYING THE MYSTERIES OF CANADA'S HISTORY

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS INCLUDE

THE RIGHT HONORABLE MICHAELLE JEAN AND ACADEMIC SCHOLAR NATASHA HENRY

At the Banff Park Lodge (rates start at \$155)

October 17 - 19, 2024

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

SOCIAL STUDIES COUNCIL
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Reference

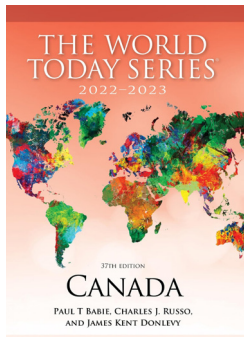
United Nations. nd. "International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024." United Nations website. Accessed June 18, 2024. www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/recognition.

What's in the Library?

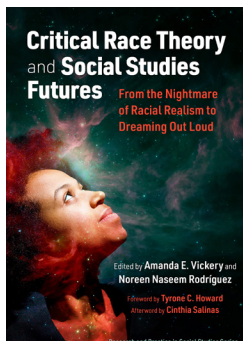
Here are some books related to social studies that have recently been added to the library collection.

(This is just a sampling. The ATA library has so much more for you to explore!)

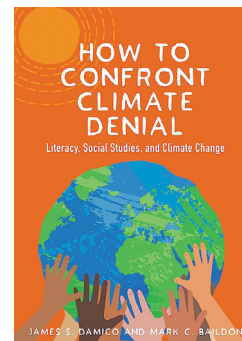
Want to check out any of these books? Send an e-mail to library@ata.ab.ca.



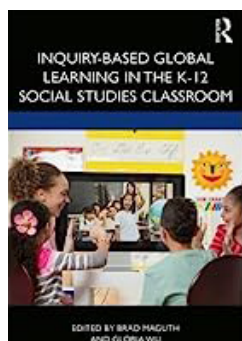
Canada 2022–2023
by Paul T Babie,
Charles J Russo
and James Kent
Donlevy
Rowman &
Littlefield,
2022



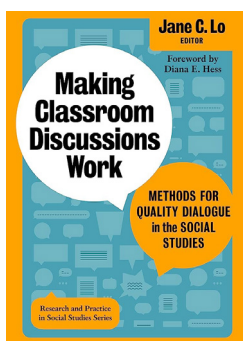
*Critical Race
Theory and
Social Studies
Futures: From
the Nightmare of
Racial Realism
to Dreaming
Out Loud*
edited by
Amanda E
Vickery and
Noreen Naseem Rodríguez
Teachers College
Press, 2022



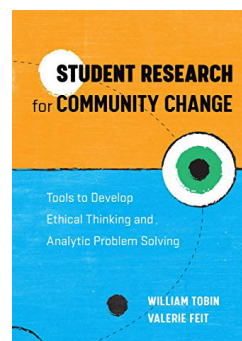
*How to
Confront
Climate Denial:
Literacy, Social
Studies, and
Climate Change*
by James S
Damico and
Mark C
Baildon
Teachers College
Press, 2022



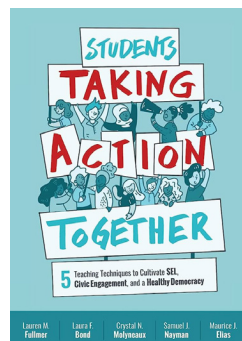
*Inquiry-Based
Global Learning
in the K–12
Social Studies
Classroom*
edited by Brad
M Maguth
and Gloria Wu
Routledge,
2020



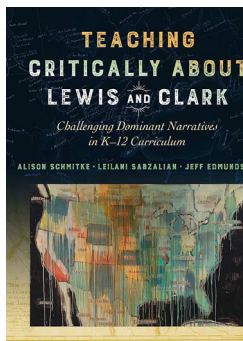
*Making
Classroom
Discussions
Work: Methods
for Quality
Dialogue in the
Social Studies*
edited by Jane
C Lo
Teachers College
Press, 2022



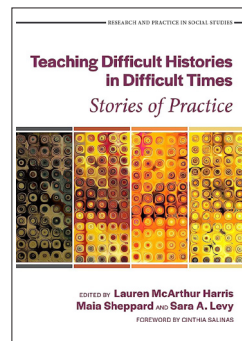
*Student
Research for
Community
Change: Tools
to Develop
Ethical
Thinking and
Analytic
Problem
Solving*
by William
Tobin and Valerie Feit
Teachers College
Press, 2020



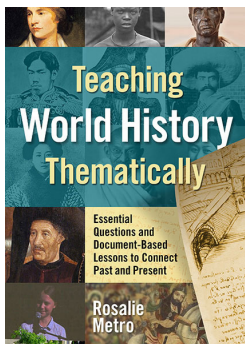
*Students
Taking Action
Together: 5
Teaching
Techniques to
Cultivate SEL,
Civic
Engagement,
and a Healthy
Democracy*
by Lauren M
Fullmer, Laura F Bond, Crystal N
Molyneaux, Samuel J Nayman and
Maurice J Elias
ASCD, 2022



*Teaching
Critically
About Lewis
and Clark:
Challenging
Dominant
Narratives in
K–12
Curriculum*
by Alison
Schmitke,
Leilani Sabzalian and Jeff
Edmundson
Teachers College
Press, 2020

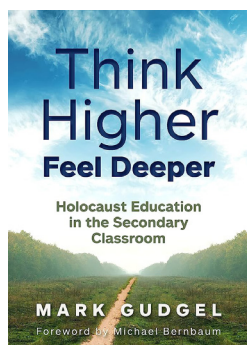


*Teaching
Difficult
Histories in
Difficult Times:
Stories of
Practice*
edited by
Lauren
McArthur
Harris,
Maia
Sheppard and Sara A Levy
Teachers College
Press, 2022



Teaching World History Thematically: Essential Questions and Document-Based Lessons to Connect Past and Present
by Rosalie Metro

Teachers College Press, 2020



Think Higher Feel Deeper: Holocaust Education in the Secondary Classroom
by Mark Gudgel
Teachers College Press, 2021



We the Gamers: How Games Teach Ethics and Civics
by Karen Schrier
Oxford University Press, 2021

Web Guides

Main channels of our web guides for teachers



TEACHER GUIDES



SUBJECT GUIDES

(curriculum)



GUIDES EN FRANÇAIS

(en français)



TOPIC GUIDES

(other topics)



SEASONAL GUIDES

(holidays)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

ATA LIBRARY

5 REASONS TO USE YOUR ATA LIBRARY



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Ready to help you find information and recommend resources.



2 SAVE TIME

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Borrow cutting-edge education robots and technology.



4 SAVE MONEY

Borrow the newest books, tech and videos before you decide to add to your collection.



5 FREE SHIPPING

Free shipping both ways province-wide!

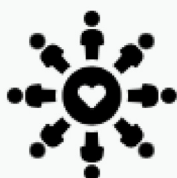
Connect with us at
<http://library.teachers.ab.ca!>

Good Social Studies

As we witness many changes in society and the emergence of a new social studies curriculum, it's important to remember what good social studies is. Here is a summary of our four-week Good Social Studies Is campaign.



BUILDS COMMUNITY



ENCOURAGES UNDERSTANDING BY EXPLORING MANY PERSPECTIVES

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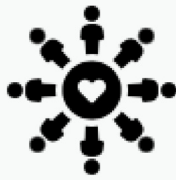
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