ONE WORLD in Dialogue

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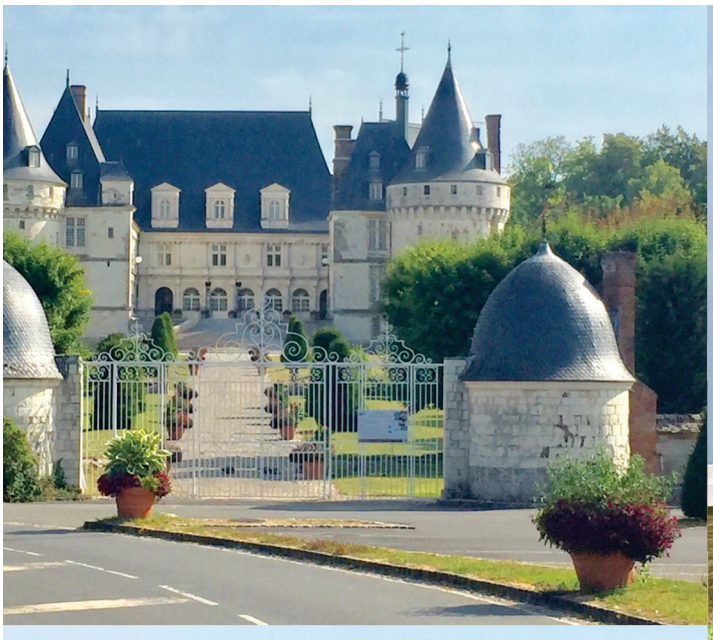

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On the Cover (photo by Craig Harding)

This summer a group of teachers cycled from Paris to London, learning about the sights, sites and history ... or as historian Pierre Nora would say, the *lieux de mémoir*—memory spaces.

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A Message from the Editor

Craig Harding

After a lengthy delay, the latest edition of *One World in Dialogue* is finally available. The articles in this edition are certain to be, at a minimum, conversation starters, if not the subject of rich conversations among social studies teachers. They will compel all teachers to reflect on some of their deeply help beliefs and assumptions—and take action as we head into a tumultuous time in education in Alberta. Some of you may have followed the heated exchanges in the *Edmonton Journal* between University of Alberta professors Carla Peck and Lindsay Gibson and journalist David Staples that continued in a Twitter exchange wherein Jason Kenney contributed with the tweet, "What happens when new-age fads and political ideology supplant critical skills and tried and true teaching methods. Exactly why we need to scrutinize pending curriculum changes, which have stated goal of turning students into 'effective agents of change.'"

The articles in this edition provide readers with ideas for considering the veracity of Kenney's comments. We would do well to consider American author Aberjhani's comment in *Splendid Literarium*, "Discourse and critical thinking are essential tools when it comes to securing progress in a democratic society, But in the end, unity and engaged participation are what make it happen." [1] Let's use these articles as a way to engage in critical thought and conversations about social studies with our colleagues. Let us not abdicate our civic responsibility, but seek to ensure that social studies remains the moral and intellectual compass for all active and engaged citizens in a vibrant, thriving democracy.

Kent den Heyer, a professor of curriculum and social studies in the Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta, challenges us to think critically about the impetus for curriculum change and the subsequent challenges to the changes suggested. Den Heyer, a passionate social studies educator, reminds us that controversy is a good thing—in fact, he notes, "If there is nothing about which to disagree, we are likely being fed pabulum." He challenges the focus on competencies and the notion that these competencies will make us globally competitive in the 21st-century economy. All citizens, not just teachers, are challenged by den Heyer to ask more questions about the "international competency order" as it seeks to simply reinforce educational inequality in Alberta. Imploring action of civil society, not abdicating responsibility to politicians, is the message adroitly presented in this persuasive commentary.

Margie Patrick, an associate professor at King's University, begins her article by pointing out that 68 per cent of Canadians think that high school students need some basic understanding of world religions. This is especially important in an era of difficult citizenship, as many current events have direct ties to religion. She argues that the study of world religions should be explicitly addressed in the curriculum, because "understanding religion is too important to citizenship education to be left to the sole discretion of individual teachers." The benefits of this

study are vast: greater understanding of our neighbours, stronger public policies that benefit the common good, understanding the nature of global conflicts and the challenge of peace building. In fact, Alan Sears and Lindsay Herriot have noted that religion is a "critical friend" of social studies (Sears and Herriot 2016). Patrick provides a thought-provoking consideration of including the study of religion as a way to enhance our collective understanding of what is necessary for a thriving democracy.

This edition concludes with two articles that encourage teachers to rethink the way they teach history. Cathryn van Kessel and Rebeka Plots (University of Alberta) investigate evil and villainification. As a bit of a primer on the idea, *the banality of evil* is a term coined by Hannah Arendt, who explained that many of the evils of the past were perpetrated by ordinary people who accepted state assertions as normal and willingly participated in acts now considered evil. They may have even done so with good intentions. In this fascinating excerpt from her recently published book, van Kessel uses a textbook analysis to explore how we create and depict villains and the consequent understanding of these actors by students. While students are enthralled with the study of villains and evil, she questions why students are never asked to reflect on their own complicity in acts that may, in the future, be considered evil. Van Kessel's article takes us on a journey that investigates villainification—the act of creating a single villain instead of understanding the broader, systemic nature of an act of evil. And, she notes, social studies textbooks can play a role in this process. I'm halfway through her book, and it has given me pause to reflect on my complicity in villainification throughout my teaching career; I'm sure this article will encourage the same in readers.

This edition of the journal concludes with Calgary teacher David Weisgerber reflecting on his actions that sought to engage high school students in inquiry using historical thinking concepts. Set within the context of high school redesign, Weisgerber sought to embark on a pedagogical paradigm shift that incorporated into his practice the ways of thinking used by experts in the field. To do so, he designed a self-study research project to better understand if a reformed learning experience, based on the principles of mastery learning, is conducive to the development of historical thinking in students. His research utilized a reflective journal to record his observations of moving to an inquiry-based learning environment in which his role was that of a facilitator as his students engaged in historical thinking. Weisgerber provides strong insights into what is important to ensure that engagement and learning are effectively connected.

The hope of the ATA Social Studies Council is that this journal continues to be one to reach for when social studies teachers are looking to engage with latest scholarship related to curriculum, pedagogy and deep understanding of how to support students' learning in the multiple dimensions of our very progressive social studies curriculum. As well, we seek to ensure that the journal will be a source of articles that creatively and critically take up important pedagogical issues and events in local, national and international contexts. As the guidelines for manuscripts say,

> *One World in Dialogue* is a professional journal for social studies teachers in Alberta. It is published to promote the professional development of social studies educators and stimulate thinking, explore new ideas and offer various viewpoints. Submissions are requested that have a classroom as well as a scholarly focus. They may include
>
> - descriptions of innovative classroom and school practices;
> - discussions of trends, issues or policies;
> - explorations of significant classroom experiences; and
> - extended evaluations of instructional and curricular methods, programs or materials.
>
> We welcome articles that take up all aspects of social studies: learning in any of the social sciences that weave together to form social studies, including citizenship education, Aboriginal issues and education, peace education, global education, economic education, history education, social justice, immigration issues, multicultural education, intercultural issues in second language

teaching, comparative education, intercultural communication and education, innovative uses of educational technologies to promote learning in social studies, and environmental ethics, environmental education and/or ecological teaching or teaching for sustainability.

Authors can choose to have their article peer reviewed by prominent social studies scholars in Alberta or, if a teacher, have it reviewed by just the editor. The quality of articles submitted under this new format is impressive, as is apparent in the current edition.

Fifteen colleagues who specialize in one or more aspects of social studies have volunteered to act as blind reviewers. They are listed, with their brief biographies, at the end of this issue. Reviewers hail from the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge and Mount Royal University. The ATA Social Studies Council thanks them all for their support and expertise.

Note

1. Aberjhani was born Jeffery Lloyd, in 1957, in Savannah, Georgia; he took the name Aberjhani as an adult. He is a poet, historian, columnist, novelist, artist and editor. He writes on literature and politics, and is perhaps best known as coauthor of *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* and author of *The River of Winged Dreams.*

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Van Kessel, C. 2019. *An Education in "Evil": Implications for Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Beyond*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

A Long Way to Go for a Short Drink of Water

Alberta's Competency-Based Curriculum Trans/Reformation, 2011–?

Kent den Heyer

The Alberta Ministry of Education's delivery of the promised curriculum transformation was about four years overdue. At this point, the only change had been in Alberta's governing party as the NDP took over after 44 years of PC rule. Then, in June 2016, Alberta's new education minister, David Eggen, announced a plan to speed up inherited curriculum initiatives from the old government and change the province's programs of study across all grades and subject areas within six years. Anchoring all K–12 programs of study by sometime in the 2020s would be pillars of "core competencies" such as critical thinking, numeracy, literacy and managing information, among others. As also planned by the previous government, Alberta was to join jurisdictions across the globe who, since the early 1990s, implemented competency-based curriculum (subsequently, many threw them out). Like a guest showing up the morning after the party, Alberta was now going to implement change according to a four-decade-old OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) recommendation for all students everywhere to learn from a competency-based education so as to meet the demands of the then imagined 21st-century economy.

Response to Eggen's plan got hot. On January 26, 2017, *Metro News* reported that Wildrose Party education critic Leela Aheer wanted to know who was involved in the province's curriculum redesign. She wanted transparency, to ensure that volunteer teacher and academic advisors working on program drafts do not all suffer from what she called the "NDP world view." Jason Kenney feared the curriculum would be "political." These criticisms are always either disingenuous or naive. All curricula, including one based in competencies, reflect both a world view and politics, not just when the government you oppose leads the process.

Despite Alberta's first change of government in 44 years, many were surprised that the Education ministry continued a top-down declarative relationship with the province's relevant expertise as to what should be renewed in the programs. Choosing to push complex issues aside that affect the curriculum-as-lived (Aoki 1993)—assessment, student mental health, teacher workloads or economic disparities between school communities—Alberta's leaders decided to join the "international competency order" (ICO) promulgated by the OECD-supported "global educational reform movement" (GERM) (see Sahlberg 2011). What follows are several concerns I have repeatedly expressed to ministry officials as a 10-year university representative on the Alberta Teachers' Association provincial curriculum committee, the Association's senior committee that interfaces with ministry officials regarding systemic needs and initiatives.

If there is nothing about which to disagree, we are likely being fed pabulum.

Despite vastly different locales, histories, national strengths, shortcomings and challenges, all must

submit to the ICO as the common sense regime (CSR) if you wish to discuss with the responsible officials how best we might meet the alleged imperatives of "21st-century learning." Within the ICO-CSR, "about what" or "for what" students should "think critically" and "manage information" (as two competencies) are never detailed. Rather, in faux-democratic fashion, ministers and their bureaucrats shunt those questions down the system to be answered later by local teachers. Yet, here in Alberta, key measures of students' achievement (and therefore that of teachers) remain centralized—Grade 12 diploma exams and the various other provincial learning assessments, along with international measures like TIMMS and PISA. Such a regime cannot but encourage teachers to stick to the safe and likely testable content regardless of what any system leader thinks needs to change.

Fraser Institute think-tankers, nervous-busy ministers and unqualified Fox-y newspaper commentators use these centralized rankings to publicly judge and often shame teachers and youth. That these measures, despite the public expense, do not provide any information to help particular students in particular places is irrelevant. Whether the economy should be better harnessed to serve education and not the other way around is now a nonsensical question. Whether we face 21st-century economic problems because our leaders insufficiently invest in research and economic diversification slides by. Teachers are soft and therefore so are our kids and thereby our future imperilled. I call it FRABIT (Frequently Repeated Assigned Blame = It's True). Thus, anyone asking necessary questions about the political nature of curriculum and questions about the present "what is" and future "what should be" asphyxiates. Instead, we must deal with bureaucrats who nod together about the glaringly obvious virtues of critical thinking and actively ignore the more complex issue of devising meaningful engagement plans or implementing the capital to support what we know matters for student success (eg, den Heyer and Pifel 2007; Berliner and Glass 2014).

We are left with competencies when we abdicate our adult responsibilities to tell good stories.

Since the early 1980s, we have witnessed a reshaping of the affective relationships between citizens, state and market—usually referred to as *globalization*. Many leaders in business, politics and education now prefer the general, comparable and exchangeable rather than the particular, singular and irreplaceable. Lost are questions about the stories that curriculum is, at core, about. Who do we think we are or wish to become? What diverse stories might we share with our youth so that we might live better together? What human do we have in mind when we educate our young? Schools, like any other community, are where we reconfigure ourselves together around stories, whether explicit or not. To have an actual curriculum conversation, we must engage in disagreements over curricula's what and why.

Competencies let adults off the hook to figure out what stories we should tell and what questions we should ask about mathematics, science, literature, history and so on. Rather, we follow 21st-century thought leaders who gather at great expense to agree with the obvious fact that numeracy and literacy are the essential bare bones of education. Innovative? When have these not been fundamental goals of schooling forever and everywhere? As we forget the necessity to argue over what stories we wish to become, it also appears we have lost the satirical necessity to make fun of what today passes as an "innovative vision" to guide "educating for the future."

We are all sophists now.

European scholar Gert Biesta (2010) distinguishes between three aims common to schools regardless of their location: qualification, socialization and the educational (see also Biesta and Säfström 2011). The public quite rightly expects schools to qualify students with skills believed necessary for their economic well-being, ranging from acquiring numeracy and literacy to specific skill training for a job. Qualification thus tends to link the schooling system to economic justifications for public funding. A second and overlapping function, socialization, involves initiating students into existing dominant orders of thought and comportment ranging from ways of speaking and behaving to disciplinary "ways of knowing" that some believe necessary for effective citizenship. Beyond but inclusive of these two expectations for schooling everywhere and through time, I think we here in Alberta need to ask, "What is educational about education?"

Like Biesta, I think this is a crucial but forgotten question as we journey further down into the present CSR. Over a decade, I have never heard questions asked at official discussion tables akin to "What do we assume in designing these programs that teachers and students lack to become better humans through their time together?" Rather, we engage in sophistic discussions in which everyone agrees that "personal well-being" is a good thing, draws up their organizational charts and convenes meetings of subject area experts to map out competencies required of the good citizen. In contrast to these contemporary sophistries

about competencies and citizenship, there are several ways to think about the educational. One is found in the Socratic example.

As Plato recounts, Socrates was an Athenian war hero without property who wandered about the city engaging all who sought understanding. Socrates charged nothing for what may be learned as, he claimed, he had no-thing to sell. This indeed confused many, for it was well known that the Oracle of Delphi had pronounced Socrates to be the wisest Greek alive.

Socrates premised his education on an axiom of equality: that both he and his interlocutors possessed equal capacity for "recollection" of what they already knew but had not adequately re-cognized (den Heyer 2015). Therefore, each needed the other to re-think presumptions in order to possibly encounter that gap between what one thinks, what one thought, and what one can and not claim to know. What might be learned from Socrates was how each of us might take up a wise relationship to knowing and knowledge and the impermanence of each. This disposition is essential to the doing of any science or art.

For the sophists, in contrast, what is most worth knowing is that which serves self-interest or reinforces desires to be productively useful in and to the State. Regardless of which sophist school of thought was momentarily fashionable, students were taught to become conversant with the master's version of right opinion so as to appear competent within the existing State's order of "what counts." What was unknown—that which could not, at the time, be counted by the sophist or state's system of accounting—was to be ignored or dispelled as unproductive nonsense. Bartlett (2011) offers a most succinct set of distinctions between sophistry and a Socratic form of education: "The sophist, concerning the truth, must be a man of perspective rather than conviction, of judgment rather than thought, of interest and not principle" (p 61).

Socrates enacted education as an inquiry consisting of what Alberta scholar David G Smith (2000) refers to as "truth seeking, truth dwelling, and truth sharing." As I have detailed elsewhere (den Heyer and Conrad 2011) using the work of Alain Badiou (2001), then as now, *truths* refer not to a property, thing or final answer, but to the material remainder of thought expressed in the realms of science, art, love or politics born from dealing with pressing social–political conundrums. These remainders of truth seeking constitute our most cherished fictions, art pieces, political achievements and scientific insights. Such gifts become possible to articulate or make when we take up a relational stance amongst the known–not yet known as we become the subjects through the subjects we study and experience in schools and beyond. Biesta (2010) refers to this process as *subjectification*. Borrowing from the French thinker Alain Badiou (2001), for me what is educational about education is the possibility of "becoming subject" to our learning and lives (den Heyer 2015).

Such concerns are but babble in the CSR of the ICO and for those bureaucratic functionaries who enact its logics. We all have become sophists now, as we can imagine nothing more for education than the acquiring of a set of competencies so as to be globally competitive in someone's dream or nightmare vision of the 21st-century economy.

Competencies are for poor kids; the wealthy never accept such tripe.

While research is never conclusive, we do have some evidence that does support anecdotal stories told by Alberta students and teachers working in schools with stressed student populations. Under the guise of creating more economic opportunities for students at economic risk while meeting external standards, some schools focus less on academic content and more on basic competencies as if the latter does not follow from the former in acts of truth or meaning making. This is not necessarily a deliberate attack on the teaching of subject content. Rather, as was the case of history taught in Great Britain, rich subject content suffered in lower-socioeconomic community schools during competency reforms from what Haydn and Harris (2009, 256) describe as "collateral damage."

A frequent result of this situation is that students who are the most in need of rich historical content to make sense of trying circumstances are instead force-fed drill practices in the structure of an argumentative sentence. It's hard to be against good sentence structure. But why has it become less relevant to question whether such content nurtures youth's attempts to understand their present circumstances or that of their community?

Yes, of course, each community is distinct and teachers require leeway to meet that particularity. But this is, to repeat myself, unlikely to be supported when funding and reputation require meeting distant and narrowly defined measures of success. Meanwhile, across town where funding and reputation are never at risk, parents, teachers and students delve into tradition-rich content as the basis to write sentences, perform plays, do art and organize food drives and, thus, further accrue the knowledge and social capital required to continue in the well-to-do life.

To summarize, citizens need to ask more questions about the historical and political rise of ICO CSR and

its role in reinforcing existing inequities in the education quality we provide students depending on their postal code (Berliner and Glass 2014). Whatever answers we find, we should note that this regime has evidently suffocated public conversations about curriculum as a question of what stories we and our youth need so as to make good sense of ourselves, our academic disciplines and our social futures. Such conversations become even less likely with parents' increasing, understandable and quietly desperate concern for the future well-being of their children, given the shrinking opportunities to earn a livable wage, decent medical plan and protected pension.

These issues are entwined with questions about public education regarding what is worth knowing and what is worth recognizing as pabulum being dispensed as an indispensable innovation for this 21st century, at this point 19 years old and many more to count before any "transformation" of programs of study comes to pass. Ignorant of the literature on curriculum change, we have been led by our ministers and ministry for a decade at great expense through the chimera of transformation. So far, what transformation, reform and change have really meant is "more of the same," but now with digital textbooks and provincial exams.

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Understanding Citizenship and Conflict

Why Alberta's New Social Studies Curriculum Can't Forget About Religion

Margie Patrick

Introduction

Alberta's current curriculum renewal process is expansive and, as with all educational projects, it has generated considerable public interest and some controversy. When then minister of education David Eggen released the first draft curriculum in the spring of 2017, in the form of K–12 scope and sequences for all the subjects under construction, the proposed social studies curriculum elicited particularly strong responses. One media commentator charged the proposed curriculum with pushing activism and social change at the expense of teaching history (Staples 2017), while Jason Kenney, at the time running for the leadership of the United Conservative Party (UCP), expressed concerns about the lack of military history and presence of social engineering (Graney 2017). Two university professors involved in the curriculum revision process at the time called many of the charges against the curriculum "unfounded rumours" and "egregious myths" (Peck and Gibson 2017).

After Kenney became leader of the UCP, a curriculum war of words ensued between him and Eggen. With Kenney now premier, it remains to be seen how he will carry through on his campaign promises to seek a "more balanced approach to social studies" (Butler 2019). However, no public conversation to date about the proposed curriculum has addressed the need for some form of education about religion, despite calls by an increasing number of education stakeholders for such education. For instance, a recent poll revealed that 68 per cent of Canadians believe high school students should learn at least some basic knowledge about the world's major religions (Angus Reid 2018). Educational theorists agree, highlighting the links between religious literacy and citizenship (Feinberg and Layton 2014; Moore 2007; Noddings 1993, 2008; Prothero 2008; Seligman 2014).

Religion is particularly important to the subject of social studies, because it is inescapable in both world and Canadian history. Most early settlers to the land that became known as Canada were Catholic or Protestant, and their legacies include Christian "accents" on the Canadian judicial, educational, immigration and political systems (Biles and Ibrahim 2005; Gunn 2018). They also embarked on a project of Christianization that included residential schools, which were sites of significant trauma and social dislocation for Indigenous peoples. But Christians were not the only religious settlers. Jewish newcomers arrived as early as 1760 (CIJA 2015), and Muslims from Lebanon and Syria landed in central Canada in the late nineteenth century before heading west onto

the Canadian prairies (Hamdani 2015). Sikhs arrived shortly thereafter, settling mostly in British Columbia. As these immigrants established communities, they created institutions and movements that reflected their religious world views and practices.

Beyond history, religion informs current events, such as the 2017 dispute over Muslim prayer rooms for students in the Peel school district, just outside of Toronto. The conflict comes into sharper focus when one understands the broader religious contexts. Protesting parents interpreted the prayer rooms as a special accommodation for one religious group and therefore a violation of the secular nature of public schools. Many parents were South Asian and had the lived experience of violent Hindu–Muslim clashes in India within the larger context of British India's 1947 partition into largely Hindu India and mostly Muslim Pakistan (Bascaramurty and Alphonso 2017). The resulting antipathies came to a head over a Canadian educational policy.

Such personally significant religion is not limited to newcomers: half of all Canadians continue to tell pollsters that their religious beliefs are important to them (Giguère 2017). There is no doubt that religion is changing as many houses of worship experience declining attendance. At the same time, the number of Canadians identifying as spiritual rather than religious is on the rise.

This paper takes religion seriously and argues that revisions to the social studies curriculum must do the same. The argument is developed through an examination of how education about religion supports citizenship education, a central aspect of social studies. Although the term *religion* will reference the world's large religious traditions, applying the term to some Asian traditions and practices is problematic and laden with colonial history and mentalities.[1] Religions are internally diverse and dynamic (Bramadat and Seljak 2005, 2008), and today most are transnational because social media and the Internet enable leaders, teachers and preachers to reach their diaspora and students around the world. Despite the vast marketplace of religious options, however, a growing minority in western countries do not connect with institutional religion. In Canada for instance, nearly one-quarter of Canadians self-identify as religious "nones" (Pew Research Center 2013). Given all of these complexities, this paper aims for focus and some brevity by limiting the discussion to the larger religious traditions present in Canada, of which the largest is Christianity. Examples drawn from countries outside Canada will be confined mostly to western countries, because they are more familiar to many readers.

One might respond to the call for more education about religion in the curriculum by suggesting that teachers are free to add such education to their teaching if they wish to do so. For example, in the new K–4 curriculum, which is to be piloted in the 2019/20 school year, teachers could teach about religion under the essential understanding of "Analyzing diverse worldviews and experiences fosters our ability and willingness to live well together." This essential understanding occurs in several subject areas, including social studies, for which the conceptual knowledge involves the contributions of such communities as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Francophone, newcomers, diverse settlers, individuals and groups (Alberta Education 2018). A teacher could indeed include religious communities, but could just as easily ignore them.

As will be argued below, understanding religion is too important to citizenship education to be left to the sole discretion of individual teachers. If students, and indeed all citizens, are to understand their neighbours, develop public policy that serves the common good, understand conflicts at home and abroad, and work toward peacebuilding, they need to know the issues involved in defining religion, what is meant by education about religion and how religion can inform people's public actions. Thus, the first section of the paper discusses key terms and concepts. The second section relates religion to citizenship education, and the final section advances three arguments about how the study of religion enhances social studies.

Terms and Concepts

Religion as a definable category emerged in the early modern period. Prior to that time, peoples and cultures did not typically conceptualize religion as something separate from the rest of life. So-called *religion*, whether in the classical Greek, Japanese, and Chinese societies, Arabic concept of *din*, Sanskrit *Dharma*, or Hebrew Bible, all referenced a comprehensive way of life (Armstrong 2014). The separation of religion from the secular state, economy and politics was achieved over time and received significant impetus from the Protestant Reformation, the Treaty of Westphalia and the Enlightenment. Increasingly, religion came to be seen as something interior, propositional, distinct from embodied rites and virtues, nonrational and inherently conflictive, if not violent

(Armstrong 2014, 5; Asad 1993; Cavanaugh 2009). These processes of creation and the ensuing privatization of religion led Cavanaugh (2009) to argue that "the category of religion does not simply describe a new social reality but helps to bring it into being and to enforce it. Religion is a normative concept" (p 85). Thus, the separation of religion from public life and politics is historically and culturally contingent, a western and liberal principle of social organization that not all societies adopt.

In Canada, secularization processes involving the privatization of religion and desacralization of public life became especially pronounced after World War Two and remained the dominant lens for public life until the events of September 11, 2001, which announced the return of religion to the public sphere, if indeed it had ever left. Yet six years later, participants at roundtables held across the country to discuss multiculturalism concluded that "Religious literacy (or the lack thereof) appears to require more attention," as public and decision-makers alike remained uncomfortable with religion, religious diversity and religious accommodations (Kunz and Sykes 2007, 5). In 2017, Beaman, Beyer and Cusak (2017) were still describing the dearth of education about religion in many Canadian provinces.[2] The resulting religious illiteracy means that citizens do not understand how religion can both animate and impede civic engagement and why some religious practices might require legal protection (Bramadat 2009; Peck, Sears and Donaldson 2008).

The lack of education about religion in Canadian public schools is atypical among western countries, many of which offer religious education (RE) courses in their curriculum (Byrne 2014; Jackson et al 2007). Where religious instruction is confessional, it is described as education *into* religion. Public schools tend to prefer RE that is education *about* religion, often from a religious studies approach in which students study a variety of religious and nonreligious world views. In the United States, teaching about religion is embedded in various subject curriculum standards. Guidelines for teachers as developed by the American Academy of Religion (AAR 2010) are premised on the internal diversity within religions, their dynamic nature and their embeddedness in culture.

Religious education and teaching about religion are not without their critics, who point to the implicit teaching of some religious beliefs and marginalization of others and the exclusion of lived religion, which in turn ignores the educational development of students' moral and perhaps even spiritual values (Ghosh and Chan 2017). Thus, some countries add teaching *from* religion, in which students learn how to make sense of the world by attending to religious beliefs, practices and symbols. This form of RE aims to foster respect and understanding of differing world views (Ghosh and Chan 2017).

While various countries offer standalone religion courses, this article argues for the inclusion of some education about religion to occur within social studies. Studying religion within its historical, political and cultural contexts will help students better understand religion as a factor of public life. When religion is conceptualized as having public import, it is relevant to students regardless of the degree to which they are personally engaged in a religious tradition or practice(s).

Essentially, what is being advocated here is the concept of *religious literacy*, a contentious term dependent upon context. Stephen Prothero (2008, 11) popularized the term, defining it as the ability to know and use religious terms, narratives, symbols, practices, scriptures and themes as well as "the ability to participate in our ongoing conversation about the private and public powers of religion" (p 14). Thus, religious literacy has a civic purpose, and various interpretive lenses are available. Those within the liberal philosophical tradition have an uneasy relationship with religion, ranging from a desire to limit public religious discourse to those who wish to introduce students to diverse world views so that they both choose wisely about what they themselves believe and also understand those who believe something different.

A "culturalist" understanding roots religion in culture. If one is to understand and engage with others, claims a culturalist, one must understand their systems of practices, systems, rituals and so on, all of which may be grounded in religion. For yet another lens, those belonging to a religious tradition may view religious literacy as the ability to read their holy texts, being properly understood by those outside the tradition or the way those outside the faith interact with the practices of their tradition (Dinham and Jones 2010). Dinham and Jones argue that religious literacy is "having the knowledge and skills to recognise religious faith as a legitimate and important area for public attention, a degree of general knowledge about at least some religious traditions, and an awareness of and ability to find out about others." It has the civic goals of correcting misrepresentations, developing relationships across differences, and creating inclusive relationships (Dinham and Jones 2010, 6). Some

Canadian scholars suggest that religious literacy within the context of Canada should pay attention to how individuals define terms and apply the terms to themselves; recognize the dynamic nature of religious, non-religious, spiritual, moral and other world views; understand each world view as distinct and heterogeneous; and include Indigenous spirituality (Chan et al 2019). A common theme among these definitions is the manner in which religious literacy supports citizenship.

Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and Religion in Social Studies

Alberta's vision of citizenship education (Alberta Education 2005a, 2005b) is similar to that of other Canadian jurisdictions that promote "student-centred, skills-based pedagogies, examining social history from multiple perspectives, addressing questions of diversity and equity, [and] critical media literacy in the one-touch information age" (Bickmore 2014, 268). Beyond these aspects, Gates (2006) claims that citizenship education must include some study of belief, whether it is shaped by religious or nonreligious faiths. For Gates, beliefs animate citizens' responses to law, health and welfare, employment, family obligations, and issues of justice. Beliefs concern "the nature of human being and of social and political belonging" (p 573) and motivate for active participation. But Gates does not give religion a free pass, arguing that beliefs can have both positive and negative political implications. Because religion can inspire national critique on the one hand and endorse nationalism and the status quo on the other hand, it too must be critiqued.

Valk (2007) also highlights the importance of belief systems for citizenship, insisting that the study of both religious and secular world views helps students become active citizens and better able to understand themselves, others and controversial issues. Rather than privatize religion, Valk and others reimagine public spaces, including public schools, as plural spaces where all world views and epistemologies are studied, evaluated and critiqued (Jackson 2003, 76–77; Valk 2007; Van Arragon 2017). Education about religion may also support student identity. As Tupper and Cappello (2008, 576–77) argue, albeit in a different context, "Students need stories both to make sense of their world and to enable them to contribute to their world; they need to both *understand* and have places from which to *stand*" (emphasis in original). For some students, religion is their place to stand and it may be the motivating factor of their civic engagement.

As students develop their (religious) identity and encounter others who do the same, they will inevitably meet with difference and conflict. Kathy Bickmore's (1993) concept of "difficult citizenship" prepares students to engage with such conflict. For Bickmore, conflict is not necessarily negative or violent, in part because it originates in the democratic protection of dissent (Bickmore 1993, 2011, 2014). A goal of "difficult citizenship," then, is to develop within citizens of various societal groups the capacity "to build paths toward understanding and democratic decision making—embracing and handling conflict, rather than erasing differences" (Bickmore 2006, 360). In this view, citizenship education prepares students to engage with opposing needs and contradictory views through nonviolent means (Bickmore 1993, 341). While Bickmore does not apply the concept of "difficult citizenship" to religion, the vision of embracing conflict rather than erasing differences certainly pertains to religion. There are differences and conflicts within and among religious traditions, and between those who are religious and those who are not. Furthermore, democratic dissent may arise from religious convictions or practices.

"Difficult citizenship" is important in Canada's increasingly diverse religious landscape. Although a majority of Canadians still self-identify as Christian, overall Catholic and Protestant numbers are declining while minority religious communities are growing (Pew Research Center 2013). Globally, Christianity is the largest religion, but pollsters predict that by 2060 Islam will have approximately the same number of adherents as Christianity (Pew Research Center 2017). Such international changes will affect Canada's religious landscape due to migration and birth rates. The increased cultural and religious pluralism will inevitably lead to disagreements. "Difficult citizenship" equips young citizens with the tools to work toward mutual understanding and democratic decision making across these differences, rather than dismissing the other as "social engineers," "un-Canadian" or "barbaric." Some basic knowledge of several major religious and secular world views can help students understand why they and others might participate in public life as they do. By gaining religious literacy, students recognize that all people respond from some position of faith or world view (Valk 2007, 2017).

Yet citizenship education in Canada and elsewhere tends to ignore or marginalize religion (Arthur,

Gearon and Sears 2010; Calhoun 2011; Sears and Herriot 2016). Curricular silence is never value neutral and, as Keller, Camardese and Abbas (2017) discovered, children as young as 10 are attuned to educational silences regarding religion. The silencing of both religious identity and learning about religion teaches students "that only their non-religious self is welcomed in school, and their religious or spiritual self must remain at home or in the community. Or, children feel ashamed and isolated when their religious beliefs, or differing understandings of spirituality or atheism are in the minority" (Keller, Camardese and Abbas 2017, 26). Silence conveys to students a hidden curriculum: some aspects of their identity are inappropriate in the public sphere.

But citizenship is not the only social studies concept in which religion is diminished. As the concept of citizenship expanded beyond voting and legal rights to encompass identity/ies, diversity and skill development (Alberta Education 2005b), multiculturalism became a concept integral to citizenship. Yet multicultural policy and education also tend to be silent about religion (Beaman, Beyer and Cusack 2017; White 2009), despite Kymlicka's (2015) designation of religion as the third dimension of multiculturalism. Beaman, Beyer and Cusack (2017, 257) wonder if the "broader sensibility related to diversity" of multiculturalism offsets the lack of religious knowledge held by most Canadian youth. One can respond, however, by asking whether it is possible to extend the broader sensibilities of respect and appreciation that undergird multiculturalism to something about which one knows very little or nothing. In the absence of knowledge, multiculturalism easily becomes a passive form of mere toleration.[3]

The concept of *toleration* has been challenged for promoting exclusionary approaches by naturalizing difference and essentializing culture (Brown 2006). Simplistic calls for toleration do not prompt an examination of the power dynamics behind the proposition of "us" tolerating "them" (Abu El-Haj 2010; Brown 2006). Tolerance is related to religion in that "Religion appears in liberal theory first and foremost as an occasion for tolerance and neutrality," resulting in the privatization of religion, the public/private binary, and the conceptualization of citizenship as secular (Calhoun 2011, 77). Cavanaugh's critique (2009) is that monotheistic religions are often presented as inevitably intolerant while the intolerance of many atheist or polytheistic societies is downplayed. Developing some religious literacy and learning about the issues facing religious minorities could help students recognize the exclusions within the concept of toleration and move them towards intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

In summary, the concept of *difficult citizenship* alerts us to the fact that conflict is not necessarily bad or something to be avoided. Religious identity and pluralism are present in most western societies and contribute to differences and conflicts. Yet, both citizenship education and multicultural education tend to ignore or diminish religion, despite the historical and contemporary public roles of religion in countries around the world.

How Education About Religion Supports Citizenship and Serves a Public Good

If silence about religion is not neutral and can affect student identity, and if religion can be a source of conflict in a democratic and religiously plural public, then developing religious literacy can be a public good. This section develops three arguments that, taken together, support citizenship education and the ways in which diverse citizens might live together well.

Strengthening Our Collective Ability to Understand Religion

Commenting on the British context, Adam Dinham (2015, 19) notes how publics no longer have the ability to talk well about religion after a century of secular assumptions, just at a time when there is "a pressing need for a better quality of conversation in order to avoid knee-jerk reactions which focus only on bad religion" (p 29). The situation is similar in Canada, where misinformation, disinterest and incorrect stereotypes about religion easily slide into discrimination. For example, after the 2015 Paris bombings for which the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, claimed responsibility, Muslims in Canada experienced various acts of violence and discrimination (Goodyear 2015). If "difficult citizenship," or the equipping of students to handle conflict rather than erase differences, is to occur and citizens are to learn how to live together well, some religious literacy is necessary. But this is a multifaceted task, as Dinham suggests, and involves the media.

In 2017, 51 per cent of Canadians said they believed that religion does more harm in the world than good, up from 44 per cent in 2011 (Joseph 2017). Pollster

Ipsos Affairs attributed some of the results to the negative impacts of ISIL, social media and the 24-hour news cycle. The issue goes deeper, however, as reporting too often portrays religions beyond liberal Protestantism and Catholicism as extremist, violent, intolerant, and perhaps foreign, racist or misogynist (MediaSmarts, nd). A study examining the construction of individual, religious and national identities within Canadian multiculturalism, as reported in two newspapers over the 10-year period of 2003–13, found that "problematic" religion extends to those who place too much importance on their religious identity. A strong religious identity is seen as challenging the dominant Christian secularism of Canada that privatizes religion (Bonnis 2015, 109). At the same time, religious groups and movements effectively use media, either to make their religion more visible (for example, posting You Tube videos about forgiveness) or for more sinister purposes (such as ISIL's use of social media to spread propaganda and attract recruits).

In addition to focusing on "bad" religion, media often misinterpret religious stories or simply miss the story due to their lack of knowledge about religion (Marshall, Gilbert and Ahmanson 2009). This requires teachers to think carefully about how they use current events, particularly if the event refers to religion. Media also shapes the construction of social boundaries between the public and private and determines what is appropriate and inappropriate (Lefebvre and Beaman 2014; Mann 2015). To avoid simplistic media interpretations of religion, students might study the ways in which all states manage religion. For example, the definition of religion has always been a tool to manage religion; one group receives benefits because it is deemed a religion, while another group does not quality for such benefits because it does not fit the official definition of a religion. Today the dominant view in western countries posits religion as private belief, which "can marginalize other forms of religion that foreground bodily practice and ritual or those epistemologies with a more comprehensive view of religion and in which the distinction between the religious and the secular does not fit" (Van Arragon 2017, 309). Citizens who understand that religion can be both public, communal and enacted, as it is in Islam, as well as private, individual and believed, as it is in most forms of Protestantism (Asad 1993), have stronger religious literacy and are better positioned to engage with public religion and their religious neighbours. As previously stated, the privatization of religion is a contingent process that privileges certain types of religion while disempowering others. Once students are able to interrogate the assumption of privatization as the sole option for religion in democratic life, they can engage more fully in conversations regarding freedoms, democratic debate and the limitations of tolerance.

Conversations can, however, be fraught with danger for students belonging to minority religions. As Bickmore points out, "When conflict surfaces, it is often the lowest-status or most marginalized participants who are exposed to the most risk of discomfort and harm, because it is their ways of being and thinking that are most likely to be unfamiliar or unpopular" (Bickmore 2011, 8). Students belonging to minority religions incur the greatest risk when engaging in class discussions, and silence may offer the best protection. Religious illiteracy in the classroom adds to the risk these students face when most of their classmates, and perhaps even their teachers, know little to nothing about their religious tradition and thus cannot recognize misinformation and misrecognition when it arises. The inability of teachers to correct misinformation or educate students about respectful behaviour towards religious individuals further isolates minority religious students (Guo 2011).

This argument for religious literacy starts with the necessity of citizens to civilly engage with each other across their differences. When students belonging to religious minorities feel it is safer to remain quiet in the classroom, or when opportunities for education about differences are passed by due to teacher and student lack of recognition, differences are erased and all students lose the opportunity to learn how to engage difference, and even conflict, in a civil manner. Perhaps if students and teachers had more religious literacy and could better evaluate media sources about religion, conversations involving religious differences would be easier to facilitate and minority students would be better protected.

Supporting Our Collective Ability to Understand Conflict

While not all conflicts involve religion, some do. Even without addressing the factor of religion, research suggests that teachers avoid teaching about specific conflicts and their causes (Bickmore 2006, 2011, 2014; Sears, Clarke and Hughes 1999; Parker 2013). While one might sympathize with the reasons for this avoidance (time, lack of knowledge, fear of giving offence), commentators point to the resulting reinforcement of dominant belief systems and

marginalization of dissent (Bickmore 2015, 18; Parker 2013). Paying specific curricular attention to religion may help unpack some of the power dynamics embedded in conflicts and promote both democratic ways of living together and peacebuilding efforts.

Scholars often write about the "ambivalence" of the sacred (Little and Appleby 2004) or the potential of religion to underwrite both conflict and peace. When religious identity is invoked in a conflict, the conflict can become more intractable (Hayward and Marshall 2015), as seen in the violence between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria and Kenya, and Sunnis and Shi'as in Lebanon and Iraq (Cox, Orsborn and Sisk 2015, 1). However, an exclusive focus on religiously inspired violence distorts religion because it ignores both the much greater violence committed by secular states (Armstrong 2014; Cavanaugh 2009) and the contributions of religious actors to peacebuilding (Casanova 1994; Dubensky 2016; Hayward and Marshall 2015). In a report examining the opportunities for international peacebuilders to support societies that have been deeply divided by religious, sectarian or ethnic violence, the authors remind readers that every religion is internally diverse and interacts with other social cleavages, such as identity politics and systems of government (Cox, Orsborn and Sisk 2015, iii). A conclusion drawn from the case studies examined in the report is that religion cannot be ignored in peacebuilding efforts. As the study notes about Sri Lanka, "The lack of attention to religious dynamics by outsiders seeking to strengthen peace in Sri Lanka—both as part of national peacemaking and local-level peacebuilding—meant that religious leaders felt threatened by the peace processes, and so became more strident in opposition over time" (Cox, Orsborn and Sisk 2015, 22). Religion can be both an aspect of conflict and part of the solution, but religious identities are important and cannot be ignored.

Peacebuilding efforts address the causes of conflict by examining its structural, cultural and relational aspects. Religious peacebuilding is "peacebuilding 1) motivated and strengthened by religious and spiritual resources, and 2) with access to religious communities and institutions" (Dubois 2008). Religious peacebuilding is evidenced in Quaker conciliation efforts in the Nigerian civil war, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone during the 1999 peace negotiations, the ceasefires negotiated by Muslim and Catholic clerics in Bosnia, and the education and advocacy efforts of an organization comprising both Israeli and Palestinian women (Dubois 2008; see also Little and Scott 2004).

Bringing the learning closer to home, if nonviolent conflict is a component of democratic civil life and the aim of difficult citizenship is to foster understanding and democratic decision making, then learning how to engage religious differences is an integral aspect of citizenship education. As a caveat, it is important to add that while religious differences are important to study, they need not be so insurmountable as to overwhelm common human needs and desires for flourishing.

Sometimes conflict brought about by religious groups contributes to the common good. Internationally, one need only think of how the African-American churches provided leadership to the American civil rights movement and church involvement in the antiapartheid movement of South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi provided a model of nonviolent resistance that many aspire to follow. In Canada, various churches protested the Canadian government's 1973 recognition of the Chilean military junta that overthrew the elected Allende government. Responding to the oppressive and torturous tactics used by military dictatorships throughout Latin America, they joined others in advocating for an immigration system that would recognize refugees as a distinct category. The revamped *Immigration Act, 1976* incorporated this and many other changes (Gunn 2018). Canadian Sikhs provide another example, working tirelessly to expand the concepts of *citizenship* and *human*. They continue struggling for religious freedom, both for themselves and for other religious minorities (Nayar 2013; Jakobsh and Walton-Roberts 2016).

In other situations, the participation of religious actors in Canadian public life led to hostility, particularly when they protested social change. This occurred in the early 2000s, when various religious groups, several of which formed the Interfaith Coalition on Marriage and Family, protested same-sex marriage. The debate was emotionally charged, with some groups on both sides ramping up the rhetoric but others displaying more nuance (Rayside and Wilcox 2011). The tenor of the debate revealed how difficult it was for many Canadians to engage with each other on substantive issues when religion was involved. More recently, many of the parents who protested Ontario's revamped sex education program in 2015 did so for religious reasons. In these types of controversies, involved parties claim competing rights and easily entrench into enclaves. Religious literacy

could help mediate such disputes by offering such approaches as insisting on public space for all respecting views, broadening intellectual and cultural horizons, and offering knowledgeable critiques (Dinham and Jones 2010, 6).

Teaching for religious literacy, studying conflicts, including those that involve religion, and examining how religion also supports peacebuilding helps students see themselves in the curriculum. By studying conflicts in democratic countries, students see examples of religious people like themselves engaging as citizens in their societies. Studying conflicts in nondemocratic situations helps students understand the benefits of democracy and how religious communities can still work as peacebuilders. In both instances, students receive tools to evaluate religious identity and the ways in which religious actors participate in public life.

Stories of religious peacebuilding abound, but they are not easily found in the news. While stories of religion and conflict cannot be ignored, if the conflict is not violent it is not necessarily negative, as Bickmore reminds us. But equally important, the negative stories told in the classroom must be balanced with stories in which religion and religious communities contribute to public life in a positive manner, such as the participation of Muslim leaders in Tunisia's transition to democracy (Stepan 2016) and the complex role of religious institutions in various transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy (Casanova 1994; Künkler and Leininger 2009).

Enhancing Our Collective Knowledge About Democracy

For over a decade, Freedom House has been chronicling the decline of freedom around the world, painting a grim picture of emboldened authoritarian regimes and rising xenophobic sentiments (Puddington and Roylance 2016). These reports point to the need for, and importance of, citizenship education. Each generation must learn for itself that democracy is "a process which needs continual renewal" (Osler 2010, 220).

Educating about religion contributes to democracy. Religion can shape world views—which are visions and ways of life (Valk 2017, 234)—and thus contain the capacity to transform lives and promote particular ways of living and being (Bramadat 2009, 15). It is this ability to affect the way citizens participate in the public sphere for both good and ill that makes religion relevant to democracy. As members of religious communities bring their ways of living and being into the public sphere, they desecularize public spaces. Education about religion, then, is an important component of citizenship education (Jackson 2003).

In the process of learning about democracy, one encounters religion. The relationship between democracy and religion is multifaceted (Calhoun 2011; Freston 2008). On one hand, participation in a religious community can develop the civic virtues and social capital necessary for civil engagement (Brusco 1995; Freston 2008; Habermas 2006). Religious groups operate humanitarian nongovernmental organizations and spawn movements such as Jubilee 2000, which mobilized Christian communities to lobby governments to forgive the debts of the world's poorest nations. On the other hand, adherents of one religion, usually the dominant religion, may restrict the citizenship and rights of others, including women and minority religious or cultural groups (Hemming 2011). In some countries, extreme tensions exist between or within religious groups (Kakar 1996; Rasmussen 2007) and religiously inspired terrorists threaten both human life and democratic institutions (Esposito 2015; Juergensmeyer 2010).

In fact, democracy empowers religion. The spread of popular sovereignty and freedom has contributed to both the desecularization of identities and sacralization of public spheres in countries ranging from India to Turkey to Mexico, and even the United States. Those who study religion and public life note how the religiously plural nature of modern countries and the ability of citizens to choose their religion has resulted in greater adoption of religions that are orthodox, conservative and public (Shah and Toft 2009). Student knowledge of both religious democratic engagement and the challenges that religious conflicts pose for democracy can develop a more nuanced understanding of democracy itself, of the resources within communities, of how communities and democratic structures either work with or against each other, and of the religious impulses that contribute, help construct or might be in opposition to the goals of citizenship and democracy.

Today, many western democracies with roots in Christianity are struggling with religion in public life (Spencer 2016; Woodberry 2012). In some countries, the relatively recent presence of Islam is challenging long-held Christian and secular worldviews (Hemming 2011) as well as Christian privilege, while in others the idea of comprehensive religion is foreign to the secular elite (Bramadat 2009). Despite Canada's long history of immigration, the country has had an

inconsistent response to religious pluralism. Christian privilege remains, as even secularism in Canada is described as Christian (Seljak et al 2008). Democratic structures are dynamic, responding to fluid social needs. Religious diversity challenges those structures to be more creative and adjust to greater change. The concept of *difficult citizenship* prepares students to engage with such challenges, and religious literacy is a necessary component of such citizenship.

Conclusion

There is nothing easy regarding the teaching about religion, and missteps can cause backlash and fears from parents (Wertheimer 2015). Internal heterogeneity means that religious communities can vie for control over how a tradition is interpreted and taught (Kamat and Mathew 2010). These are legitimate concerns for educators. Yet they also reveal how religion can no longer be relegated to the private sphere, in part because it is undemocratic to do so, and in part because it diminishes citizenship education.

A robust citizenship education can be enhanced by a curriculum that consciously includes religion (as well as spirituality and nonreligious world views). Social studies cannot escape serious examination of religion, whether it be to challenge simplistic stereotypes, evaluate religious arguments, discern religious contributions to such central social and political themes as citizenship, pluralism and living together well, or to discuss links between religion and identity. Religion matters, not only to those who self-identify as religious, but to all citizens, just as secular world views matter to everyone, and not only those who consider themselves secular. When citizens have some degree of religious literacy, they have a deeper grasp of history and current events and a broader basis on which to know and interact with their neighbours. Such civic engagement helps fulfill the goals and purposes of social studies.

Notes

1. Borrowing from Protestantism, colonial rulers emphasized God, belief, official acts and places of worship. Several of these emphases do not apply to Buddhists, Taoists, Confucians and Hindus.

2. Quebec offers a mandatory Ethics and Religious Culture course.

3. While Alberta's social studies curriculum uses the term *multiculturalism*, the program rationale describes diversity under the category of pluralism (the heading reads "Pluralism: Diversity and Cohesion" [Alberta Education, 2005a]). Some proponents of pluralism claim that the term does not assume a majority culture, but others point to its prescriptive element and embedded power dynamics. Within the concept of pluralism, the questions of what "counts" as religion and who decides are important and contested. See Bender and Klassen 2010.

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A Textbook Study in Villainification: The Need to Renovate Our Depictions of Villains

Cathryn van Kessel and Rebeka Plots

Introduction

All historical accounts used in social studies classrooms, by their very nature, will be simplifications of the past. Curriculum developers, textbook authors and teachers are forced to make difficult choices about how and what to include. Discussions about historical significance (Seixas 1994; Seixas and Peck 2004; Wineburg 2001) as well as ethical judgments (Gibson 2014) and historical responsibility (Löfström 2013) are helpful in the task of deciding what topics to include and how students might understand those topics, but in this article we are arguing for criteria regarding how certain historical figures—villains—are portrayed. The portrayal of villains can influence student judgments about those implicated in historical and contemporary atrocities. We focused on the portrayal of Hitler in Alberta social studies textbooks, in part because of his status as a quintessential villain from his extensive representations in media.

This textbook analysis was inspired by data (literally from the Latin, the "things having been given") from a larger phenomenographical study on youth conceptualizations of evil (van Kessel 2016). During some of the interviews and task-based focus groups with Grade 11 students (aged 16 to 18), participants voiced their concerns about the portrayals of the villains of history. This textbook study, inspired by those comments, seeks to illuminate the extent to which Alberta's high school textbooks can represent Hitler as an almost otherworldly villain. Hitler can become, as one participant, Nikolai, stated, "a representation of the situation." A single person (in this case, Hitler) becomes a hyperindividualized, evil entity instead of an interconnected human who, although an integral part of a horrific process, was only one of countless people in Germany and beyond who participated.

It is not a new criticism to demonstrate that social studies textbooks can inadequately discuss particular events, people or processes, and that these inadequacies have unintended, negative consequences (eg, Anyon 1979; Apple 1993; Brown and Brown 2010; Loewen 2007; VanSledright 2002). Our analysis, however, is unique in its focus on villainification, and is intended to help teachers and teacher educators navigate the stormy waters of discussing historical atrocities with a view toward a less violent future. It needs to be noted, however, that this study is not an attack on textbook writers or the process of composing a textbook; rather, this project seeks to illuminate a broader process that informs not only textbook writing but also other educational situations—villainification (van Kessel and Crowley 2017). The task of anti-villainification is to remove this false sense of comfort that evil is other and not "us," and calls upon us to engage with a more complete analysis of historical actors and contingencies, with an emphasis on the personal implications.

Villains as Historical Actors

Curriculum and support materials (for example, textbooks) often portray historical actors without nuance, where "not only victims, but also victimizers, collaborators, resisters, bystanders, and rescuers were all individualized or collectively represented, normalized or exoticized, personalized or abstracted—that is, if their roles were included in the first place" (Schweber 2004, 157). Villains are often hyperindividualized, or blame is placed on a faceless mob (that is, a vague nod to society), but neither of these depictions explicitly asks students to weigh their own complicity in parallel contemporary processes (van Kessel and Crowley 2017). Yet, students are intrigued by the moral and ethical issues of history:

> [Students] immediately perceive the historical contexts and relate to personal experiences or general moral values. Their reasoning gathers both the historical context and the present context. Even lessons we must learn for the future are emphasized, which indicates the students' historical consciousness. (Ammert 2017, 32)

We argue in this article that a commitment to antivillainification can maintain this interest while fostering a sense that social change can and should occur. Such a situation is difficult with simplistic villains, as one Grade 11 student, Serena, noted: "Regularly, when we portray an evil person I feel like it's really one-dimensional. It's just that's it, that's all you are going to be told. There are no layers." A focus that rests too much on the villain (for example, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Josef Stalin) and not also on the ordinary processes and everyday people involved allows us to shut down our thinking about the part that we all play, or could have played, in the atrocities we are quick to condemn and blame on a select few others. Undoubtedly, these villains of history committed atrocious acts; however, we need to provide nuanced layers to these portrayals.

The study of history is often considered to be a way to illuminate issues of right and wrong (Hakkari 2005), but the students' perception of a rupture between the past and present might obscure such a lofty goal, especially in tandem with an individualistic sense of responsibility (Löfström 2013). If we take curriculum in Grumet's (1981) sense, as "the collective story we tell our children about our past, our present, and our future" (p 115), then that story ought to be one that unveils how we all can contribute to systemic harm, thus providing an impetus to correct those (in)actions. We cannot expect ourselves or our students (or society at large) to avoid repeating past atrocities if we fail to critically examine them and feel the discomfort of our own potential complicity in comparable horrors. To this end, the insights gained from this study are intended to guide future textbook and other resource publishing, as well as more modular and/or personal resource development by teachers.

Villainification

Villainification is the process of creating single actors as the faces of systemic harm, with those hyperindividualized villains losing their ordinary characteristics (van Kessel and Crowley 2017). There is a tendency to simplify historical figures, such as the process of heroification, whereby "flesh-and-blood individuals [are turned] into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest" (Loewen 2007, 11). Heroification and villainification morph ordinary humans of the past into the extraordinary heroes and villains of history. Both obscure how everyday folk are forces of change within larger structures, risking removing a sense of civic agency—for good or for evil (Epstein 1994; Kohl 1991; van Kessel and Crowley 2017), and such simplifications can have unintended, adverse effects, such as the idealization of victims, which forecloses the opportunity to work through the trauma (Britzman 2000). Heroification can rob students of their sense of civic agency and self-efficacy (Epstein 1994), and villainification can obscure how students (or anyone else) can perpetuate evil through our daily (in)actions (van Kessel and Crowley 2017).

In Western society, we tend to understand successes and failures as the result of individual traits and drives isolated from broader processes (Audi 1993; Britzman 1986; Brown and Brown 2010; Löfström 2013; van den Berg 2010; van Kessel and Crowley 2017). Such a simplification can lead to a conception of a hyperindividualized villain who is aberrant and divorced from context and relationality. While the atrocities of the Second World War (for example) are beyond normal experience, those who perpetrated those atrocities were human beings like those we encounter in our daily lives, even ourselves. It is all too easy to condemn Hitler, the Nazis or even all of Germany for horrors like the Holocaust as entities unlike our normal experience, and thus neglect our own complicity in the contemporary horrors of 2017, such as the fate of thousands of Syrian refugees and missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) in Canada, to name

(sadly) only a few situations of many. How we study the processes of history affects our sense of agency here and now, because the process of students reflecting upon ethical concerns in the past "sensitize[s] the students to the predicament of ethical-political choices that they, as citizens, must face today" (Löfström 2013, 517; Selman and Barr 2009).

Ordinary, Extensive Evil

It is important to challenge the idea of pure evil in human beings. A belief in pure evil due to a process of demonization has a clear (and troubling) effect on how we relate to the ideas of retribution and punishment (Webster and Saucier 2015), which by extension affects how we live together in our societies. The task of antivillainification calls for a recognition of what Elizabeth Minnick (2014) calls *extensive evil*:

> the massive and monstrous harms carried out by many, many people for significant periods of time—months, years, decades, and more (slavery and sexualized violence: when has humanity been without these and others?). They are the evils of which we would not speak, of which we so often say, "unthinkable." (p 170)

Minnick, a former student of Hannah Arendt and influenced by the idea of the banality of evil (Arendt 2006), sees ordinary people at the root of extensive evil. Although Arendt's analysis of the (in)famous Adolf Eichmann was somewhat flawed due to his duplicitous self-representation (Stangneth 2015), such a ruse was possible only because there were indeed "so many perpetrators of the kind he was pretending to be" (Browning 2003, 3–4). Otherwise normal people can and do commit horrific acts such as mass killing. As Arendt herself phrases it, "The sad truth of the matter is that most evil is done by people who never made up their minds to be or to do either evil or good" (Arendt 1978, 180). Social psychologists have wrestled with the topic, such as the research of Stanley Milgram (1974) and Philip Zimbardo (2007) regarding obedience and role adaptation in social contexts. Such phenomena are also revealed in the historical record with analyses like those of Christopher Browning (2017), regarding the Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Nazi Germany, and of Jean Hatzfeld (2006), in the context of the Rwandan genocide—analyses that reveal that some participants were eager, others needed to be coaxed or coerced, and some did not think about their actions at all. Such complexity is explicit in the work of James Waller (2002), who identified a nexus of factors ranging from ethnocentrism and desires for social dominance to moral disengagement and self-interest to socialization and to victim blaming, us–them dichotomies, and dehumanization.

High school students in social studies classrooms seem to appreciate complexity in the portrayal of Hitler and other villains. Serena noted that she learned in her advanced placement (AP) psychology class that Hitler was a human being with a degree of complexity (van Kessel 2017, 582), and that such a framing, paired with antivillainification discussions from a research project about evil

> has made me think of Hitler as, not less evil, but him as a person as less evil because his act was evil and not him. This has changed my thinking 360. So I feel that it would have a place in painting evil as not just a person, but the act as well so that history doesn't repeat itself cause I could easily go and do the same thing as well. (van Kessel 2016, 168–69)

In this article, we claim that Alberta's government-mandated textbooks for high school social studies can promote villainification to varying degrees. We want teachers to add nuance to exceptional individuals in historical narratives so that the complexities of the past are highlighted and thus teachers can increase the likelihood that students might see themselves as similarly capable. When these exceptional individuals are the villains of the story, the stakes are high because students might then be tacitly encouraged to remain thoughtless and complicit in everyday actions that facilitate atrocities like those of the Second World War and systemic harm like racism (van Kessel and Crowley 2017).

Villainification Textbook Analysis

The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which the content of social studies textbooks can contribute to villainification. For the textbook study, we engaged with the textbooks for Grade 11 (junior) and 12 (senior) students in mandatory social studies classes; namely, Social Studies 20-1, 20-2, 30-1 and 30-2. Social Studies 20 is aimed at Grade 11 students, and 30 for Grade 12s, although students technically can take the courses in any year as long as they have the prerequisite. This discipline (among others) is streamed (although the government resists such a framing). The *-1* indicates the most rigorous class, and thus *-2* has a subtly different curriculum.

The guiding question from the program of studies for both Social Studies 20-1 and 20-2 is "To what extent should we embrace nationalism?" but the related issue subquestions vary slightly, with the 20-2 questions asking, for example, "Should national interest be pursued" instead of 20-1's more nuanced question, "*To what extent* should national interest be pursued?" (Alberta Education 2007a, emphasis added).

We chose to focus on the example of Adolf Hitler in textbooks from the province of Alberta. Because education is a responsibility of each province, social studies and history curricula vary by location, but the Second World War is a widely taught topic in Canada and elsewhere. The historical figure of Hitler is ubiquitous in and out of the classroom, likely in part from his extensive representations in film and other media. This phenomenon is not unique to Alberta, or even Canada. Liu et al (2009) asked university students from a vast array of countries to name the most important figure in world history from the last thousand years. Students from 11 countries ranked Hitler as first or second in influence, which led Liu et al (2009) to brand him as a "universal villain" (p 685). Do the textbooks in Alberta echo this internationally pervasive stance? We feel that starting with a supervillain like Hitler is a helpful place to begin the task of antivillainification because he is such an extreme example, one that many (if not all) of us have traditionally considered in a very simplistic light. Although working toward antivillainification now, the authors of this paper have previously reified simplistic villains in their teaching and beyond (and still struggle with the task). Thus, the provocations in this article are not meant to be overly critical of the textbook content or the authors themselves—rather, we strive to create conversations that might be helpful for teachers and their students. After engaging with the more obvious example of Hitler in government-approved textbooks, we hope that educators will consider Hitler's portrayal in their other resources, as well as other examples of possible villains in their curriculum, such as Duncan Campbell Scott in the context of Indian Residential Schools in Canada and Bull Connor in relation to the US civil rights movement (van Kessel and Crowley 2017).

In Alberta, officials from government, not school districts, select approved resources for classroom use. With the current program of studies, Alberta Education has approved one or two textbooks for each social studies course in this province. The textbooks for Grade 11 examined in depth for this study include the two choices for Social Studies 20-1, *Exploring Nationalism* (Gardner et al 2008) and *Perspectives on Nationalism* (Harding et al 2009); the only option for Social Studies 20-2, *Understanding Nationalism* (Hoogeveen 2008); the only option for Social Studies 30-1, *Perspectives on Ideology* (Fielding et al 2009); and the only option for Social Studies 30-2, *Understandings of Ideologies* (Noesgaard et al 2010). To be approved by the provincial government, these textbooks must adhere closely to the Alberta program of studies for social studies.

The programs of studies for 20-1, 20-2, 30-1 and 30-2 identify a few contexts for studying Nazism during the interwar period and the Second World War. In 20-1 and 20-2, students study this period in some depth; they must "analyze" (20-1) or "explore" (20-2) the "relationship between nationalism and ultranationalism," as well as "analyze" (20-1) or "examine" (20-2)

- nationalism and ultranationalism during times of conflict (causes of the First and Second World Wars, examples of nationalism and ultranationalism from the First and Second World Wars, ultranationalism in Japan, internments in Canada, conscription crises) and
- ultranationalism as a cause of genocide (the Holocaust, 1932–1933 famine in Ukraine, contemporary examples). (Alberta Education 2007a, 22, 34)

In their subsequent social studies class, students will "evaluate" (30-1) or "analyze" (30-2) ideological systems that rejected principles of liberalism (Communism in the Soviet Union, fascism in Nazi Germany) (Alberta Education 2007b, 20, 33), which is placed in the context of the role of government in relation to the people economically and politically.

It is important to note that these courses are in social studies and not history. Social studies is necessarily (and, in our opinion, beautifully) "unwieldy" because it draws from a variety of disciplines beyond history, including anthropology, economics, philosophy, psychology and sociology (Smith 2017). Thus, we are not seeking to criticize textbook authors for a lack of historical detail; rather, we see our task as encouraging an engagement with sensibilities from other fields—most notably insights from Hannah Arendt's philosophy and political theory—as a supplement to the accounts about the villains of history. Such an approach jibes well with the intent of the social studies program of studies, in which the themes of nationalism and ideology are explored in a variety of places and periods, thus providing fertile ground for conversations about agency and responsibility in both historical and contemporary times.

Method

The specific methodology for this study is informed by other education scholars who have conducted textbooks studies, most notably Brown and Brown (2010), who conducted a textbook analysis on how racial violence is portrayed in Texan textbooks. First, it is important to find the relevant sections of the textbook (in our case, sections on the Second World War) and read these sections carefully, noting language, phrasing and accompanying images, as well as notable absences. For a content analysis, the physical layout, such as font and placement, can also be considered (Leavy 2017, 145); thus we also noted, for example, what content was marginal (literally and figuratively), such as what is included in optional questions for students. Next, patterns and themes are identified. Then, it is key to reread the sections with the initial analysis in mind, morphing and/or refining the analysis as needed and selecting representative examples. Such a constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin 1990) is important for credibility. Questions to frame the analysis included the following:

- Who is considered responsible for the harm (eg, discrimination, murder or other cruelty) inflicted? Is the sentence in the active or passive voice? Is the agency clear?
- Is Hitler himself named, or Nazis, Germans and so on? How and when is the term *Nazi* used versus *German*? Is there a sense of nuance within any of the groups discussed?
- Was there a similar process in another country that has gone unnamed?
- Is there a sense that the harm is committed at the whim of Hitler or due to broader policy? Is that harm indicated as having the support of some of the ordinary citizens of Germany? Of elsewhere?
- What images accompany these descriptions? What might these images convey to the reader?
- What questions are the textbooks asking students? Do they require students only to answer with facts or do they ask students to engage with self-reflection? How are Hitler and the Nazis framed in these questions?
- What definitions do the textbooks use for words or concepts related to the subject matter?

Responding to these questions required initial coding and repeatedly returning to the excerpt's initial context to check for inconsistencies and sweeping generalizations.

Coding Strategies

We chose to code the data manually, without a software program, so that we would not miss nuances or "latent meanings" (Leavy 2017, 147). The first author began with a pilot study of two textbooks, and then her research assistant, the second author, coded those textbooks independently before proceeding to the remaining textbooks. The first author then returned to all the data to continue the recursive process (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011). We used mainly descriptive and values coding, so as to summarize data and make assumptions about the cultural constructs guiding the content as well as what impressions the readers might form from engaging with the text (Saldaña 2014).

We began by analyzing the textbooks from highest grade level to lowest grade level, and within grade levels coding the -1 textbooks before the -2. This process ensured that the content within grade levels could first be compared and contrasted, and then cross-examined, with the other grade level. The first step in the coding process was to examine the index of the textbook in order to get a sense of where the textbook discussed the subject matter and related issues outside of the chapters that were exclusive to the subject matter. We then went on to examine the definitions pertaining to the subject matter to better understand the way each textbook wanted students to understand the terminology in the chapters. Finally, we examined the chapters that were pertinent to the subject manner, as well as the pages in the index that were not a part of these chapters, and noted observations on how the textbook discussed Hitler, the Nazis and Germans, as well as assumptions that readers may have made from the noted passages.

The second stage of coding involved comparing and contrasting definitions as well as the content of the textbooks, first within each grade level and then across grade levels. The content included chapter titles, key terms, key issues, chapter structures, how Hitler and the Nazis were discussed and, finally, how each textbook framed questions about Hitler and the Nazis. We made observations on each of these categories on how readers might interpret the differences in these categories, specifically with word choice as well as the content presented.

Findings

We found a range of results—some intense villainification, some mild villainification, and a few attempts to address a nexus of personal and societal

implications. Textbook authors diverged on the extent to which they attributed Nazi policy and actions to Hitler alone, revealed societal factors that contributed to the Second World War, identified the contributions of ordinary folk and implicated the student readers with a sense of shared responsibility. These interconnected categories highlight the difficulty in conveying narratives that do not contribute to villainification.

Hitler as the Sole Director of Nazi Policy

Textbooks vary in terms of whether Nazis other than Hitler are named. Some of the Alberta textbooks we analyzed did not discuss other Nazis, even when they were directly related to the content. There are logical reasons for this omission (for example, the programs of studies focus more on themes than historical detail), and yet there can be unintended consequences. Hitler could be hyper-individualized to the point where even other prominent Nazis are not implicated. Fielding et al (2009), Harding et al (2009) and Noesgaard et al (2010) referred only to Hitler specifically or the Nazi Party in general. No other important historical figures in the Nazi Party are named or held responsible for the actions taken during that time; for example, "the Nazis attempted to control what German citizens believed by controlling the ideas to which they were exposed" (Noesgaard et al 2010, 172). This statement does not name others intimately involved, such as Joseph Goebbels, the minister of propaganda for the Nazi Party. Similarly, Noesgaard et al (2010) presented the techniques that Hitler used in order to maintain the support of the German people—propaganda, youth movements, the use of the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) and the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), and scapegoating (p 178)—without naming Goebbels, Himmler or other key players. These absences, although understandable, can simplify the processes and people involved by boiling down responsibility to merely Hitler, thus unintentionally absolving any individuals (other than Hitler) of blame. Noesgaard et al (2010) presented Nazism as something that Hitler himself was solely responsible for, writing that "Hitler created his own form of fascism, Nazism" (Noesgaard et al 2010, 178). This statement is somewhat misleading because the Nazi Party existed before Hitler joined it (although, arguably, Hitler and other Nazi elites shifted the party's direction), but more importantly, this statement absolves other members of blame for involvement in the rise of the Nazi Party and their dedication to the hateful views espoused by Party members.

Harding et al (2009) asked the question, "Why Hitler? Why the Holocaust?" (p 192), which could perhaps lead students to the conclusion that the Holocaust could not have happened without Hitler (although it could equally provoke the question of how broader society allowed someone like Hitler to achieve power). The authors noted that anti-Semitism was previously present in Germany, and yet Hitler is still the driving force:

> Anti-Semitism was not new to Nazi Germany—it was present long before Hitler resolved to act on it. He perceived that anti-Semitism had a long tradition in parts of Europe, but that he alone was going to be the one to act. (Harding et al 2009, 196)

By framing anti-Semitism and the Holocaust/Shoah in this manner, students might overlook the anti-Semitism of other prominent Nazi Party members and society at large, thus somewhat absolving them of responsibility for the horrors endured by many peoples during the Holocaust/Shoah. Even though "parts of Europe" are mentioned with respect to historical anti-Semitism, they are not named (and the anti-Semitism in North America goes completely unnamed), which is troubling because students might not then be able to properly understand how widespread and entrenched anti-Semitism was before the Second World War.

Some textbooks included details about individuals other than Hitler. *Exploring Nationalism* (Gardner et al 2008) and *Understanding Nationalism* (Hoogeveen 2008) named Goebbels as an important figure who had a major influence on how the German people reacted to Hitler and the Nazi Party and their policies. Gardner et al (2008) detailed how "in Germany, the Nazis used newspapers, radio, and film to promote extreme nationalism" (p 140), explaining the hatred Joseph Goebbels harboured for those he did not count as part of the nation, such as calling Jewish people "the incarnation of evil" (Gardner et al 2008, 140). Hoogeveen (2008) also named Goebbels as "Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister … [who] used this propaganda machine to feed Germans' fears and insecurities to deceive the German people into believing that they were superior and Jews were evil" (p 135). By naming Goebbels and describing the way in which he used propaganda in order to influence the German people, we avoid blaming only Hitler. Instead, we

have an opportunity to identify not only other Nazis, but also the general population who ought to be implicated (albeit passively), which can allow the reader to understand the implications of extensive evil in the context of Nazi Germany.

Societal Factors

Effectively naming and describing broad-level, societal structures that contributed to the horrors of the Nazis proved difficult for the textbooks examined. The authors of *Perspectives on Ideology* (Fielding et al 2009) tended to refer either specifically to Hitler alone or generally to the Nazi Party, or both ("Hitler's Nazi Party"), and rarely to the general population who contributed to Nazi ideology and deeds. Although there were some statements that reflected processes in play, there was no prepositional phrase of "by _____," and so broader society has been implicated but not named. An example of such a statement would be "such claims took advantage of widespread pre-existing anti-Semitism" (Fielding et al 2009, 177). This statement stands in contrast with Gardner et al's (2008) statement that "anti-Semitism was common in many countries, including Canada" (p 166). Although perhaps also somewhat vague, the specific mention of the home country of the textbook's readers has the potential to draw the students' attention to the extensive evil of anti-Semitism. When societal factors are included, but nebulous, the reader can be left with the general impression that Hitler manipulated anti-Semitism (which needed no help to be destructive) to his own personal ends: "The ideology of fascism in Nazi Germany was in part an expression of Adolf Hitler's deep-seated hatred of liberalism, Jews, and communists" (Fielding et al 2009, 186). Although Fielding et al (2009) aptly indicated that Hitler was not the only one responsible, nonetheless readers might not explore that idea because other factors are not specifically named and thus remain vague: "[Hitler] pledged to restore the economic strength and national pride that he *and others* [emphasis added] believed had been lost" (Fielding et al 2009, 186).

Noesgaard et al (2010) attempted to engage with the economic and political uncertainty as well as the fear of communism that led to the Nazi rise to power. Major contributing factors for the rise of Hitler and fascism in Germany are explored, such as how the Treaty of Versailles affected domestic sentiments in Germany and how there was a loss of confidence in the Weimar Republic because "many blamed the democratic German government for not effectively addressing [the] economic problems" (p 175) caused by the terms of reparation in the treaty.

Harding et al (2009) showed a clear commitment to providing a variety of quotations to explain the factors leading up to the rise in popularity of the Nazi Party, such as the German reaction to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles as well as the impact of the Great Depression on Germany's resolve for self-sufficiency. There are quotations ranging from Nazi Party statements on the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler's perspective on appeasement, and sections on Pastor Niemöller, White Rose, Ervin Staub and Elie Wiesel. Harding et al (2009) also explained the reasoning for the expansionist policies under Hitler's rule, including the failure of the League of Nations and the need for more physical space for production; however, as mentioned above, these discussions centre on Hitler as an individual.

Exploring Nationalism (Gardner et al 2008) and *Understanding Nationalism* (Hoogeveen 2008) explore the how broader society was also to blame for Nazism because of their focus on the role propaganda played in fostering hatred for the Jews. This task was aided through the images presented, such as images of young children reading *The Poisonous Mushroom*, a children's anti-Semitic propaganda book (Hoogeveen 2008, 135), as well as descriptions such as "using powerful public addressing systems, careful staging, and skillful architectural design, Hitler whipped up support for his ultranationalist policies at mass rallies" (Gardner et al 2008, 145).

Inclusion of Ordinary Folks

Fielding et al (2009) admirably attempted to specifically name ordinary Germans who were affected by Nazi policies, for example, Liselotte Katcher, the Bishop of Limberg, Sophie Scholl and Luise Essig. Gardner et al (2008) include now famous, but at the time ordinary, people such as Oskar Schindler (p 176). Furthermore, Harding et al (2009) made general nods to ordinary German folks, such as "In Germany, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party received wide support for the changes they brought to the people and the nation" (p 180). Noesgaard et al (2010) took this idea further by pointing out that it was not just Nazi gangs responsible for the violence and destruction during *Kristallnacht*. This inclusion is important because it shows students that people who were not affiliated with the Nazi Party also took part in the violence, which allows students to reflect on how ordinary citizens can also take part in violence even though they

are not ideologically driven. Furthermore, Noesgaard et al (2010) mentioned that German citizens who openly opposed the government and its policies were persecuted and/or killed—an important point because it shows that there was resistance and that not all the German people were complacent in accepting the government's policies and actions.

Images can powerfully reveal the place of ordinary people in the extraordinary events of Nazi Germany. Hoogeveen (2008) included an image of members of the Nazi party demonstrating in Berlin in 1938 on the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (p 119). These folks were not in uniforms—they would look like ordinary people to the readers of the textbook, and thus might serve as a tool for antivillainification, especially if teachers draw their students' attention to this image.

Personal Implication

By highlighting the role of ordinary people, textbook authors have an opportunity to foster a sense of personal implication in their students. Hoogeveen (2008) makes a statement that might resonate with students, explaining how "from elementary school through university, students were taught Nazi values" (p 139). Students could be led by such a statement to consider the role they might have played if they had been born in Germany at that time. Both Gardner et al (2008) and Hoogeveen (2008) contain a section on the Holocaust/Shoah that outlines genocide and the international response, explaining how Canada would not accept the MS *St Louis*, a ship with Jewish refugees from Europe. This case study is an excellent example of ethical judgments in history (Milligan, Gibson and Peck 2018), and allows students to engage with an uncomfortable history that they may not have been aware of, allowing them to connect more with the past in order to understand related issues, such as how Canada responds to refugee crises today.

Personal implication is furthered by critical questions in the sections on the Holocaust/Shoah, such as how "Elie Wiesel believes that forgetting about human suffering makes people accomplices—partners in the crimes. Do you agree with his opinion? Explain your reasoning" (Hoogeveen 2008, 161), and if crimes against humanity could be committed in Canada considering that "people involved in Adolf Hitler's extermination program were all ordinary citizens with spouses, children, mothers, fathers, boyfriends, girlfriends, and neighbours" (Gardner et al 2008, 167). Asking questions like these allows students to engage with uncomfortable truths such as the ordinariness of the German people involved in various jobs that led to extermination of many peoples during the Holocaust, as well as revealing the discomfort of how banality could allow something similar to happen here.

Limitations

This textbook study engaged with only five textbooks, and these were specific to the Alberta curriculum. We feel that these are at least somewhat reflective of how teachers might approach the topic of the Second World War in this province because these textbooks were written by highly experienced Alberta teachers. It should be noted, however, that teachers will take up the content of these textbooks in a variety of ways and that the textbooks themselves are not designed or intended to be the only resource for the course. Teachers will supplement textbooks with other materials and insights that may support, extend or challenge the textbook content. We hope that this study draws attention to how we teach about the Nazis and the Holocaust/Shoah in our schools, and can provide some guidance for teachers as they select additional resources for this topic and others.

We feel that antivillainification work in classrooms calls for an emotional element that requires care for each student and the classroom community. There are many ways to attend to such "difficult knowledge" (Britzman 1998; 2013) that are beyond the scope of this textbook study. To this end, we would like to note the helpfulness of particular works in the context of social studies: Lisa Farley's article "Radical Hope: Or, the Problem of Uncertainty in History Education" (2009) and H J Garrett's book *Learning to Be in the World with Others* (2017), among other works that attend to the affectual or emotional aspects of teaching social studies teaching (for example, Helmsing 2014; Sheppard, Katz and Grosland 2015).

Discussion and Implications

Some textbooks provided a framework for Nazism that emphasized blame on Hitler (and, to a lesser extent, the Nazi Party more vaguely) without exploration of other figures or factors important in that time period. Although economic and political factors are recognized, it is easy to fall into a narrative that does not explore how ordinary German citizens were affected by Nazi Party policies or how they reacted to them, a discussion that

is vital if we want to encourage students to thwart comparable processes of hate in the contemporary world. Hyperindividualized portrayal of the Nazis (for example, citing only Hitler as the agent of evil) discourages thoughtfulness regarding the capacities we all have for similarly evil deeds.

Our Eurocentric curriculum in Canada and the United States creates a whole host of problems, but one salient to this study is the simplistic take on history in which there are good sides and bad sides, which shuts down thinking about complexities and limits understandings of history and historiography (Van Nieuwenhuyse 2017); for example, "we" won the Second World War, and so "we" are good and "they" (that is, the Germans) are bad.

Because students tend to see textbooks as neutral reporters on the past (Wineburg 1991), it is important to interrogate written and visual representations within textbooks. Through the creation of individual villains, complex situations involving many interconnected factors (human and otherwise) are unintentionally oversimplified. Villainification makes it more difficult to recognize and evaluate systemic factors, particularly vis-à-vis how we all might contribute to systemic harm at times. Thus, antivillainification analyses are needed to ascertain the extent to which textbooks contain an unintentional curriculum that teaches students that they cannot be present during, or participate in, processes of systemic harm. This textbook study provides a starting point to (re)think how educators might portray the "villains" of history with a view to subverting harmful processes in play here and now. Students find ethical issues in history interesting (Ammert 2017); consequently, there is an opportunity to engage students in ways that provide an opportunity to pay careful thought to the atrocities of the past, with a view to working toward positive social change in our own times.

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Reflections on the Practice of Teaching and Learning Historical Thinking

A Self-Study in a Redesigned High School Social Studies Classroom

David Weisgerber

Abstract

History education in high school, along with the ways in which teachers are engaging secondary students in the learning of history, is a topic of great importance in our current society. Historical thinking is among the key benchmark skills and practices that students are expected to develop in high school social studies, according to the Alberta K–12 program of studies (Alberta Education 2005), but how this mode of thinking is delivered to students is something with which many teachers wrestle. Grade 10–12 social studies educators in Alberta are faced with additional challenges in teaching historical thinking as they engage in a process of high school redesign (Alberta Education 2017). I was curious as to whether engaging in this redesign paradigm shift would entail changes to my practice in relation to the opportunities I provide for students to engage in historical thinking. As part of a graduate course at the University of Calgary, I designed a self-study research project to better understand whether a redesigned learning environment is one that is conducive to the development of historical thinking in students. My observations during this project suggest that incorporating opportunities for student engagement with historical thinking concepts in a redesigned high school classroom require continued, intentional effort, and will not occur naturally. This article provides the background context and a report of the findings of my self-study research, as well as discussion of the impact redesigning pedagogical approaches in task design and instructional design can have on the teaching and learning of historical thinking for social studies teachers in high school classrooms in Alberta.

Reflections on the Practice of Teaching and Learning Historical Thinking

Historical thinking is discussed in the social studies program of studies under "Dimensions of Thinking" (Alberta Education 2005) and is identified as a benchmark outcome in which students should demonstrate proficiency by the end of Grade 12. The teaching of historical thinking is fundamental to providing students with the supports they need to become not only successful social studies students but also engaged, active citizens. This is valuable, as Wineburg (1999) stated:

> … the study of history is so crucial to our present day and age, when issues of diversity dominate the national agenda. Coming to know others, whether they live on the other side of the tracks or the other side of the millennium, requires the education of our sensibilities. This is what history, when taught well, gives us practice in doing. (p 93)

As a high school teacher in Alberta for 17 years, I have made the deliberate integration of historical thinking into my pedagogy a focus throughout my career, but I developed much greater interest in it during my graduate studies at the University of Calgary. I became aware of Seixas and Morton's (2013) work *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts*, which describes six historical thinking concepts and how teachers could incorporate these into their practice. I wondered if changes to my practice as I engaged in high school redesign would provide more natural opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking. Rather than explore historical thinking through the lens of benchmark skills strictly as defined in the program of studies (Alberta Education 2005), I made use of Seixas's model of historical thinking as a conceptual framework. This framework provided a research-informed model that aligned with the high school redesign effort to promote concept-based instruction. Specifically, I focused on four of the six historical thinking concepts described by Seixas and Morton (2013), which are historical significance, use of primary source evidence, continuity and change, and cause and consequence. Proficiency in these concepts involves designing an inquiry-based learning environment, and this is consistent with pedagogical changes suggested in Alberta Education's (2017) *Mastery Learning* high school redesign document. To understand how I provide opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking, I used self-study as a research methodology framed through the work of Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), who defined it as "the study of one's practice in order to improve it" (p 100). Through the process of moving to an inquiry-based learning environment, I sought to carry out less explicit teaching and instead began to act as a facilitator and guide as students explored course material. I hypothesized that this environment would naturally lead to more opportunities for engaging in historical thinking. I made detailed observations and reflections on how I assumed certain tasks and instructional decisions might naturally create learning opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking concepts.

Background

Engagement with Alberta High School Redesign

The reason to engage in this reflection on my practice came from the increasing interest of many jurisdictions in Alberta to promote high school success. High school redesign is an Alberta Education initiative to support success by identifying nine principles that encourage high school teachers to more intentionally assess learning outcomes of their programs and provide opportunities for students to engage in learning that reflects the subject discipline as it is practiced by professionals (Alberta Education 2017). Nine principles form the core of high school redesign:

- Mastery learning
- Rigorous and relevant curriculum
- Personalization
- Flexible learning environment
- Professional learning
- Meaningful relationships
- Home and community
- Assessment
- Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment

As the first of these principles, *mastery learning* states that there is a growing need for teachers to become familiar with how to incorporate opportunities for students to gain proficiency in thinking that mirrors that of professionals in the field. I chose to focus on this one principle to frame my reflections because of researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2014) and Ercikan and Seixas (2015), who indicate that the authentic assessment of disciplinary thinking is crucial to the development of 21st-century learners. I believe a deep understanding of this paradigm shift is of particular importance to social studies teachers in Alberta, because we are directly engaged with discovering the best ways to teach history and to engage students in discussions about the relevance of historical understanding to their ability to become informed and active citizens.[1] As historical thinking is directly identified in the program of studies as a benchmark process, I designed my research to determine if some of the changes I was making to my learning environment might affect students' opportunities for engaging in historical thinking.

Context

My school is located in a large urban centre in Alberta. It has a student body of close to 1,800 learners ranging from Grades 10 through 12. The school has from its inception been focused on the process of high school redesign through professional learning, implementation of technology and design of learning spaces. As a learning leader on our social studies team, I wanted to model pedagogy that embraced the spirit of high school redesign and provided a rigorous attention to the program of studies, both to allow students to have the greatest chances for success in their studies and to allow for open and collaborative discussion with other teachers in my department and the wider school about possible paradigm shifts in instruction. The design of my research as a self-study was intentional to provide a starting point for this discussion.

Literature Review

Historical thinking is itself a subject of debate as to its definition, its purpose and how students should engage in it. Adding complexity to this debate is the placement of history in social studies. Seixas (2017) calls it a "tug of war" (p 593) between the promotion of a national vision and the creation of engaged citizens. Clark (2011) identifies a debate in the teaching of history between those who argue that knowledge of the past leads to a national identity and sense of citizenship and those who propose that historical epistemology should be studied first. Parsons and Beauchamp (2012) discuss this in their work on competency education in Alberta. They advance the idea that the content in the curriculum of various disciplines, including social studies, needs to be explored through the use of discipline-specific skill sets. To this end, Alberta Education (2016) describes historical thinking multiple times in its document describing competency education in social studies and directly links it to the expression of critical thinking. These documents, however, do not provide a clear definition of what historical thinking actually entails. The Alberta social studies program of studies (Alberta Education 2005) does not clearly articulate a definition of historical thinking either, but states that students should become able to think historically by developing the skills of analyzing, discerning, interpreting and evaluating in the context of historical evidence across cultures, through multiple sources and narratives, and through identifying patterns of change over time. Osborne (2011) identifies the fundamental questions of historical thinking as, "How do we know what we think we know? How reliable is our knowledge? What does it really tell us, and why does it matter anyway?" (p 72). In exploring historical thinking, Peck and Seixas (2008) describe two ways of going about the teaching of history. One focuses on the content, which they identify as first-order concepts. This is what teachers will often focus on through direct instruction. Peck and Seixas (2008) include examples of *nation* or *revolution* among these concepts. The other way is what they describe as second-order concepts. These, Peck and Seixas (2008) claim, "provide tools for doing history, for thinking historically" (p 1021). Peck and Seixas (2008) note that these second-order concepts are often not directly explained or explored by teachers. They indicate that there is an assumption among educators and curriculum writers that students will simply become adept at these concepts as they engage in learning the content of the first-order concepts. Gini-Newman (2014) supports the idea that this assumption exists and claims that students must be explicitly taught to think conceptually. This way of teaching thinking, he argues, requires an explicit language for engaging and assessing student understanding. Seixas and Morton (2013) developed this language through a model for historical thinking that suggests that students should demonstrate growth in six second-order concepts:

- Historical significance,
- Primary source evidence
- Continuity and change
- Cause and consequence
- Historical perspectives
- Understanding the ethical dimension of historical interpretations

Erickson, Lanning and French (2017) claim that when teachers create an inquiry-based learning environment with tasks that allow opportunities to engage with these types of concepts, students will develop proficiency in them.

I believe that despite the importance of the debate about how to define historical thinking, the matter of how to provide opportunities for students to engage in this type of conceptual thinking is also critical. Gini-Newman (2014) and Erickson, Lanning and French (2017) support the idea that a conceptual understanding of the discipline of history aligns with the paradigm shift of moving from direct instruction to a focus on mastery learning as it becomes less about what is being studied and more about how students are thinking about what is being studied. Clark (2011) recognized

a gap in the literature about the nature of what actually happens in social studies classrooms to facilitate the teaching and learning of history and historical thinking. My self-study is intended to make a contribution to filling this gap. My findings indicate that I fell victim to the assumptions identified in the literature, as I anticipated that in applying the principle of mastery learning to facilitate historical thinking without providing students with a language to demonstrate their understanding, students would naturally be drawn to second-order conceptual thinking.

Research Methodology

My initial idea was that by engaging in the paradigm shift of high school redesign and adopting a focus on mastery learning, I would naturally create more space in the learning environment for students to engage in historical thinking. I wondered if I designed tasks and implemented them in a way that highlighted the skills (analyze, interpret, evaluate and so on) described by the program of studies (Alberta Education 2005), would students have opportunities to naturally engage in the second-order concepts of historical thinking that Seixas identified? Fundamentally, this research is focused not on measuring student improvement or the value of an intervention, but on identifying specifically whether I was efficacious in providing opportunities for students to engage in the work of the discipline of history in a redesigned high school setting. This step is critical for understanding where I might best engage in further research to incorporate interventions, assessments or tasks that improve students' understanding of historical thinking concepts.

As stated above, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) discuss how intentionally reflecting on practice allows teachers to improve. Self-study is a reflective form of research in the social sciences that creates this opportunity because the researcher is also the subject (Samaras 2011; Loughran 2007; LaBoskey 2004). Though conducted by an individual teacher/researcher observing and reflecting on their practice within a very specific context, the intent of a self-study is to share the findings and thus connect to others around them, because the sharing of these findings provides an open insight into the classroom. As Friesen (2009) indicates, teachers improve their practice through sharing with their peers. In choosing to use self-study as a research methodology, I am highlighting the areas of growth in my practice to others who, I trust, will be able to gain insight into their own incorporation of historical thinking in their classrooms, and perhaps engage in a dialogue to determine best practices. This deep reflection into my practice has provided me with invaluable insight into how I can continue to improve my teaching in ways that are in line with the principles of high school redesign and that provide opportunities for students to engage with historical thinking.

I conducted my research through the use of a research journal, as recommended by Samaras (2011). Journals are defined by Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) as a place to reflect through free-flowing writing, exposing the thoughts, interpretations, feelings and ideas concerning observations of practice by the researcher. I was able to capture reflective moments and make observations of my own practice in the implementation of a task in Social Studies 30-1 that I anticipated would require students to engage with the concept of historical significance. I chose a convenience sample, because this particular group of students was the only level of instruction that I was currently providing. As previously stated, I was not focused on gathering data on students' level of comfort with historical thinking, but rather on how I was responding to the paradigm shift of high school redesign. I made these observations during the first semester of the 2017/18 school year. My journal reflections were made in late September through early October. The high school redesign principles (Alberta Education 2017) recognize that it is most difficult for teachers of Grade 12 courses to take perceived risks in pedagogical change because of the pressure of the diploma exam. Feeling that this could be the case for myself as well, I focused on a short period of time early in the semester for my reflections.

Historical Thinking in My Classroom Redesign

The elements I specifically focused on were my instructional design and task design. By *instructional design*, I mean the actions I take to facilitate learning. By *task design*, I mean the decisions I make in planning and executing lessons. In recording my notes in my research journal, I reflected on how elements of my practice allowed for opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking.

The most significant change I made to my practice with the adoption of the principle of mastery learning is to shift to a social-constructivist, dialogue-based environment as described by Kim (2010). This environment involves little explicit teaching, and multiple daily tasks focused on group work, feedback and discussion. This redesign is why I wanted to study whether opportunities for engaging in historical

thinking concepts were present in my practice and if this shift had an impact on my ability to provide opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking. I reflected on how my task design and instructional design within this environment allowed for students to naturally and independently engage in discussion of four of Seixas and Morton's (2013) second-order historical thinking concepts. I noted how I allowed students to use primary source evidence, to gain an understanding of the historical significance of the actions or ideas of particular individuals, to understand how moments in the past have a cause and consequence and to realize where continuity and change can be identified in studying the past. I focused on these four concepts because they seemed most likely to be evident in my teaching at that particular point in the course and due to the time allotment for this study.

Findings

Overall Findings

As discussed in the literature review, Gini-Newman (2014) claims that students do not arrive in a learning environment with disciplinary thinking skills in place but, rather, that they must be explicitly taught to think in a conceptual way. This self-study indicated that there is a significant amount of truth to that statement as it applies to my own practice. By reflecting purposefully on the extent to which I provide opportunities for students to demonstrate historical thinking concepts, I was made explicitly aware of the surface-level understanding I had of what is necessary for historical thinking to take place. In pursuing an answer to Clark's (2011) question of what happens in social studies classrooms to facilitate historical thinking, it became apparent that though I designed tasks that I initially thought would provide students with natural opportunities to engage in historical thinking, my own perceptions of when this would happen hindered their development. My inquiry-based learning environment allowed me to create robust tasks designed to align with mastery learning, and while they were intellectually engaging, my tasks did not explicitly provide students with a language for historical thinking. This led me to conclude that my task design and instructional design did not naturally lead to student engagement with historical thinking and that it is crucial for teachers to provide students with a language for historical thinking they can use to focus their inquiry.

Observations on Task Design to Facilitate Primary Source Evidence and Historical Significance

In an example of a task I designed, students were given the inquiry question, "To what extent did events of the 19th century influence the thinking of political philosophers?" Traditionally, I might simply have lectured on the historical background of political ideologies. Applying the redesign principle of mastery learning to the topic, I used a group discussion format for conversations about source material. I distributed the following quote, from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws*, about checks and balances between executive, legislative and judicial power:[2]

> When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws, to execute them in a tyrannical manner. Again, there is no liberty, if the judiciary power be not separated from the legislative and executive.

Figure 1. An example of a source document given to students for collaborative sharing.

Students had a short period of time to engage with peers and create a graphic depiction of how these checks and balances might work in practice and state why the author of the source might be concerned that each branch of government could keep each other accountable. Students were able to collaborate quickly and naturally and then present their findings from where they sat rather than "taking the stage." Previous to this, students had completed reading and discussion of the ideas of prerevolutionary thinkers in France. My anticipation was that they would be able to use their knowledge of the context in which a primary source was written to form an understanding of why a particular individual might make certain suggestions for how society should be governed. I assumed that while students were discussing the political ideas in the source, they would naturally enter into debate about how the source showed evidence of the time in which Montesquieu lived and how that may have influenced his ideas. I observed after this task, however, that

> Students described their process of reasoning why their model of checks and balances worked, but struggled to understand why Montesquieu himself

would have been particularly in favour of these. Most missed discussion of the section of the quote "… apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws," and were not able without prompting to understand the fears Montesquieu had. When I specifically pointed out what he might have been feeling, they were quick to connect it to the political situation in the Ancien Regime … but most seemed satisfied with getting their diagram completed. Though discussion occurred, groups did not engage each other and the space required the presence of a teacher to encourage dialogue connected to primary source evidence. (Journal entry October 19)[3]

In this primary source analysis activity, the design of the learning space allowed opportunities for historical thinking skills to be gained, but I did not provide students with the language to articulate what they were doing.

Observations on Instructional Design Shifts to Facilitate Thinking About Primary Source Evidence and Historical Significance

Regarding the understanding of primary source evidence, Seixas (2017) paradoxically commented, "We cannot understand the context unless we already understand the context" (p 599). What he means is that it is quite difficult for students to grasp the situation in which a primary source was written or created. Most historical documents were not meant to be found by social studies students centuries later—they were simply something used at a particular time in the past. The historical thinking concepts of using primary source evidence and historical significance are connected to my instructional design choices in promoting mastery learning. Lazonder (2014) identifies the need for scaffolds in inquiry learning to engage learners at their own pace, and I chose to use the flipped classroom model to allow for this.[4] I reflected on the opportunities for students to engage with historical thinking concepts in my adoption of Sams and Bergmann's (2013) flipped classroom model and the decision to regard the textbook as one possible resource among many secondary and tertiary sources for the course. The approach I adopted sought to allow for investigation of multiple sources and removes the impression that there is a specific keeper of knowledge. Baepler, Walker and Driessen (2014) identify the usefulness of the flipped classroom in shifting the focus from teacher centred to student centred, because lectures can be viewed online at a student's own pace and classroom time is for face-to-face dialogue. Sams and Bergmann (2013), as well as Hertz (2012), describe shifting from a traditional instructional model to a flipped classroom as a way for teachers to reflect on practice, as Dewey suggested, because they are changing the way things have been done and asking if this meets the needs of their students. Self-study allowed me to make full use of this reflective practice. Seixas (2017) states

> … the historical questions that drive the inquiry of the texts set up [a] web of problematic tension involving the relationship between past and present … These are not questions that would have occurred to the historical peoples who will be investigated in order to arrive at satisfactory answers for today. Thus, working with primary sources is never merely a technical problem to be guided by a few algorithms. Rather, it calls into question the complex web of relationships between past and present, and thus between the historical discipline and everyday life. (p 599)

My instructional design strategies of flipping the classroom and removing textbooks as the guide to source material allowed for much greater freedom in how I was able to engage students in both learning by using primary sources and understanding the historical significance of an event. My anticipation with this next task was that, because of this, they would naturally ask why a particular individual's view should be considered historically significant and if there were other views they could seek out. Instead, I observed that

> Knowing that students have had an opportunity to view a video on D2L and look at the PowerPoint notes I would traditionally have gone through with them provides me with a confidence that I will not miss something critical. I realized today that in looking at a quote from Edmund Burke I had not actually told the class the term *conservatism*. From the information they had viewed about Burke the night before, they were still able to read the source and discuss the inquiry question "Why would Burke support the American but not the French Revolution?" They asserted that it was because in the American context, the revolution has preserved many of the traditional values of European society, such as class and private ownership of wealth, where the French had, to a greater extent, done away with these. They argued after reading the line "Liberty does not exist in the absence of morality" from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, that Burke's views were aligned [more] with those of the American crafters of the Declaration of Independence than the

> Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. (Journal entry October 10)

Through use of the flipped classroom model, I observed that the students came to make hypotheses on their own that these two primary documents were significant to understanding some of the origins of liberal thought and that Burke was correctly placed on the right side of a political spectrum without me ever having taught a traditional lesson on conservative values. What was missed was a natural questioning by students of why Burke was historically significant at all. Without directly identifying a language for historical thinking concepts, the changes to my instructional design did not of themselves incite students to inquire into historical significance. The flipped classroom model provided me with the opportunity to guide students into developing competence in historical thinking, but my reflections indicated to me that students were not naturally engaging in the second-order concepts of historical thinking.

Observations on Task Design for Cause and Consequence and Continuity and Change

Koh, Tan and Ng (2012) assert, "Teachers who aim for authentic student performance create assignments or assessment tasks that call upon students to construct their own meaning or knowledge through in-depth disciplined inquiry. The tasks are related to real world problems that have meaning and applicability beyond academic success in school" (p 136). They indicate that teachers are "designers of learning opportunities" (p 137) and that "the preparation of students to become critical thinkers, productive workers, and lifelong learners in the new knowledge-based economies requires classroom assessment to move towards constructivist learning approaches to promote students' higher-order thinking" (p 138). Friesen (2009) argues that teachers need to design learning that is intellectually engaging and meaningful, starting with prior knowledge and focusing on teaching conceptual thinking in order to provide students with the ability to flourish in a knowledge economy. Koh, Tan and Ng (2012) say that "authentic assessment tasks should provide students with more opportunities to make their own hypotheses and generalizations in order to solve problems, arrive at conclusions, and/or discover new meanings" (p 140). For Seixas (2017), the historical thinking concepts of identifying continuity and change and analyzing cause and consequence are related to this type of authentic and meaningful work in which students of history should be engaged. Seixas says that "historians assume not that continuity reigned, but that continuity and change coexisted, and the puzzle is to figure out how much of each there was, for whom, in any particular period in the past" (p 600) and that "concepts or customs that were assumed to be continuous, are probed for change over time" (p 600). In designing tasks allowing for rich conversation, the re-examining and possible rejection of previous ideas as well as a spiralling, nonlinear epistemology, I tried to provide opportunities for students to engage in these historical thinking concepts. An example of this was designing a task for students to explore the historical development of economic liberalism from the industrial revolution to the present. I began by having them engage with a CBC *Ideas* podcast describing the changing nature of work (Eisen and Kelly 2017). My anticipation of the historical thinking in which students would engage is captured in this journal reflection made during planning:

> Today I had a discussion with a student about the ability of laissez-faire capitalism to provide security for workers. The [CBC] podcast I heard a few nights ago was very intriguing and something I think students would have strong feelings about, since it is their future and jobs that are being changed through the adoption of automation. It could work as a hook. I wonder if the ideas of classical liberalism and the perspectives of the speakers on the podcast can be combined into a task where students think about the cause and consequences of adopting an economic system in a society? (Journal entry September 27)

The suggestion of the host was that automated robots are causing a change in the way work is done, creating a second industrial revolution. Faced with this initial provocation, students were asked the following inquiry question: "To what extent are modern economies prepared to deal with the changing nature of work?" Students were tasked with identifying the main types of modern economic systems and connecting these to the ideas of an industrial revolution era economic philosopher. They had to listen to the various perspectives of the guests in the podcast, who had differing views on the way economies had adapted to changes in technology they faced over time and how modern economies might react to automation based on these observations of change over time. They had to link the ideas of at least one of the guests to the development of solutions that ranged from allowing the free market to create new jobs, to government regulation of automation, to union activism. This task asked students to develop the background context (cause) and respond to an inquiry question regarding perceived direct and indirect consequences. The podcast made connections

between the first industrial revolution and the new one surrounding automation. The task allowed students to link the economic theories of classical liberalism and reactions to classical liberalism with modern economic theories and to identify possible areas of continuity and change in how these ideas were put into practice in response to conditions of the 19th century compared to those of the 21st century. The task involved discussion and modelling, because their perspectives were shared back to the larger group at various points throughout to gain feedback. I assumed this task would engage students in a study of continuity and change in examining the longevity of ideological beliefs, and would also challenge the claims of modern practitioners that they are following a particular ideology. On one occasion during this task, I observed that

> Students are skipping through the podcast to mine it for key information rather than listening to the full discussion. How can I encourage them to think about the connections rather than for the "right answer"? (Journal entry October 3)

And on another occasion,

> I intended the task to allow students to explore the changes in economic ideologies that occur in response to historical contexts but they seem content with identifying and naming and less concerned with exploring and contrasting the context of the ideas. I wonder if they are having difficulty thinking about the fact that it was people who caused these systems to function and not the case that the systems are detached from people? Did my design allow them to truly look for continuity of economic ideas through different historical contexts or was my inquiry question not explicit enough? I think they have a good idea of how economic conditions drive new thinking, though, and this is allowing them to ask questions of how different systems such as capitalism might need to be adjusted to incorporate changing circumstances. (Journal entry October 5)

This inquiry is an example of my assumptions that students' engagement with second-order historical thinking concepts would naturally occur in a task that asked them to use research skills to look at historical developments. Upon reading my reflections, however, I find that I did not specifically ask students to use these skills or describe them in any detail. My practice has changed in my planning and thinking about tasks from the perspective of historical thinking, but I do not consistently offer students opportunities to engage in the vocabulary of historical thinking or to articulate the skills they are learning. I will also allow that my own lack of full comprehension of historical thinking concepts was made apparent through this reflective self-study. In most of my reflections, though I internally wonder if they are beginning to think historically I do not yet directly provide students with opportunities to discuss their thinking or to become cognizant of historical thinking concepts.

Discussion

Through a self-study of my instructional design and task design as I move to apply the principles of high school redesign to the teaching and learning of historical thinking, it became clear that my practice creates opportunities for second-order conceptual understanding of history, but they are not explicitly named and taught. My design is consistent with the inquiry-based learning environment that is conducive to historical thinking (Seixas and Morton 2013), but I need to be more deliberate in describing the skills to students so that they can articulate them.

Various student comments were recorded in my reflections. Some of these indicate that while they were not, perhaps, becoming articulate in historical thinking, they were nonetheless intellectually engaged. Because I was not consistent with giving students the language they needed to directly understand historical thinking, it is possible that through engaging in high school redesign and adopting principles such as mastery learning, I underwent a paradigm shift and the students did not do so to the same extent. While many students commented that they had enjoyed certain tasks, I recorded this note at the end of September:

> Today a student asked me, "When will we be moving on to the learning in social? We don't really do anything. The other class is already writing their second test. Are we behind?" (Journal entry September 29)

This troubled me; I realized that designing a space where students were comfortable to dialogue with each other still did not encourage them to lose their preconceived idea of what it meant to learn history or social studies. They were pleased with the environment, but they felt concern that they were not engaging in traditional learning and might be disadvantaged. To mitigate this, I note in my reflections of the same day that

> I did not give them direct language such as "You are learning how to think in an important way that we call understanding historical significance," but rather I placated them by saying, "You are learning the same things as the other class but aren't ready for a test yet." (Journal entry September 29)

I have noticed that in adopting the high school redesign principle of mastery learning in relation to historical thinking, my assessment of students learning is based on fewer tasks, which are summatively assessed after many formative feedback loops. This is supported by Koh, Tan and Ng (2012) as they discuss a shift in pedagogy from quantity to quality by using authentic assessment practices. I still use traditional assessments such as multiple-choice tests and essays, but students appear to do well on these traditional assessments as well and have deeper conversations around why they were challenged by particular questions rather than asking why their mark was low. My research here did not focus on assessment, but it has led me to ask very meaningful questions about how to assess historical thinking if I do not provide clear language for students to use and if I do not fully appreciate the concepts myself.

Significance

I have learned a great deal about where my practice has changed and where it needs to improve to become more intentionally focused on providing students not only with opportunities to engage in historical thinking concepts but also to become articulate about their ability to discuss these concepts. Teachers who are engaged in high school redesign and wonder about assessing outcomes and competencies are encouraged to look at my practice and reflect for themselves as to how teaching historical thinking will change when engaging in a transition from traditional methods of instruction and task design toward the principles of high school redesign.

Conclusion

To teach historical thinking, it is crucial that teachers have a clear grasp of what they are trying to have students understand. Just including historical research in a task does not generate a discussion of cause and consequence. Teachers must design tasks that intentionally focus on teaching the language necessary for articulation of historical thinking concepts. The flexible and dynamic nature of the redesigned high school learning environment is exactly what is needed for this type of task design to take place. My reflections indicated that students were engaging in critical thinking related to historical knowledge; with inclusion of direct teaching of a language to articulate historical thinking concepts, the learning environment would be conducive to their ability to think conceptually about history.

Through this reflective process, I have become aware of the need for articulating the exact disciplinary critical thinking skills that I want students to become strong in; this has improved my practice significantly. I suggest that the field of self-study be more widely discussed among history educators, because it is deeply helpful in highlighting and refining practice. I have come to understand that the next step to move my practice forward is to help students to become articulate in their expression of historical thinking. My self-study is offered as a model for how engagement with historical thinking can happen in social studies classrooms in Alberta, but there needs to be intentionality to allow for meaningful articulation of conceptual understanding on the part of both teacher and students.

Notes

1. In Alberta, the study of history is integrated throughout the social studies program of studies (Alberta Education 2005). Teachers are tasked with helping students become skilled in historical thinking in such ways as "sequencing of events, the analysis of patterns and the placement of events in to context to assist in the construction of meaning an understanding" (p 9). An understanding of history and an ability to think historically are identified as being necessary for students to actively engage in Canadian democracy. There is not an emphasis on the learning of first-order thinking concepts as defined by Seixas and Morton (2013), although the specific outcomes for some Division I and II grades engage students in understanding their community and national identity through study of specific historical events. In high school, the study of history is part of larger inquiries into globalization, nationalism and ideology. Study of specific historical events, such as the Cold War or the French Revolution, is undertaken to provide context for these wider inquiries. There are six strands of social studies that highlight the various disciplines it comprises (Alberta Education 2005). The strand Time, Continuity and Change links elements of the general and specific outcomes for the various grade levels (K–12) to the learning concepts of "Considering multiple perspectives on history, and contemporary issues within their historical context" (p 6). The study of history as defined by this strand is aimed at helping students "understand and appreciate the social, cultural and political dimensions of the past, make meaning of the present and make decisions for the future" (p 6).

2. Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, completed *The Spirit of Laws*, a treatise on political theory, in 1748. A reprint of the 1752 translation into English by Thomas Nugent is available at https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/montesquieu/spiritoflaws.pdf.

3. This and subsequent journal entries are from the author's research journal, referred to above in "Research Methodology."

4. Sams and Bergmann's (2013) flipped classroom model posits that if students use time at home to view recorded lectures, videos or notes, they can spend time in the classroom on inquiry-based learning. Students access traditional explicit teaching individually, through a digital platform at their own pace. Students engage in tasks involving the practice of the discipline in the classroom in the presence of their teacher.

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David Weisgerber has been a teacher with the Calgary Board of Education for 17 years and is currently social studies learning leader at Nelson Mandela High School. Working with the incredible team that opened this new high school allowed him to focus on implementing outcomes-based assessment into social studies and to become involved with high school redesign. David completed his master's in education in 2018, focusing on research in the learning sciences on how design thinking can lead to the improvement of teaching practice though providing intentional learning opportunities based on feedback cycles.

One World in Dialogue Review Board

Thanks to everyone who shares their insights and practices about teaching social studies in effective and inspiring ways. We welcome articles that take up any of the multiple aspects of social studies.

The articles you submit to *One World in Dialogue* can now be peer reviewed. If you are an academic or a graduate student, your article will receive a blind review process from two reviewers. If you are a classroom teacher, you can request that your article be peer reviewed or editor reviewed.

Fifteen scholars, from the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge and Mount Royal University, have volunteered to review papers submitted to *One World in Dialogue*. Each colleague researches one or more of the multiple aspects of studying and teaching in social studies: issues and curriculum from any of the social sciences that weave together to form social studies, Aboriginal issues and education, peace education, global education, social justice, immigration issues, multicultural education, intercultural issues in second language teaching, comparative education, intercultural communication and education, innovative uses of educational technologies to promote learning and create new knowledge in social studies, and environmental ethics, environmental education and/or ecological teaching or teaching for sustainability.

Each of the reviewers has submitted a brief autobiography.

Pamela Adams, PhD, University of Lethbridge

Pamela Adams received her BA/BEd (Great Distinction) from the University of Lethbridge in 1981, her MEd from the University of Lethbridge in 2000, and her doctorate from the University of Calgary in 2005**.** Previously, she taught junior and senior high school social studies for 17 years, before being seconded to the University of Lethbridge in 1997. In addition to being the Faculty of Education's coordinator for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement for six years, she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in the areas of the social studies education, collaborative inquiry and action research, school improvement, adult learning and professional development. In 2005, she was appointed a teaching fellow in the Centre for the Advancement of Excellence in Teaching and Learning and is presently an assistant dean in the Faculty of Education. She has written extensively about school improvement and teacher professional learning, including her recent book with David Townsend, *The Essential Equation: A Handbook for School Improvement* (Brush Education 2009). She is passionate about working with student teachers and teacher mentors through professional development activities related to establishing learning communities and collaborative environments that have student learning at their heart.

Cecille De Pass, PhD, University of Calgary

A Commonwealth scholar; professor; president/chair, Education Sector, Canadian Commission, UNESCO; president, Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC); and associate director, Cultural Diversity Institute, Cecille DePass is respected within university and community spheres for her teaching, research and community service.

Her Caribbean roots and sensitivity to social justice issues infuse the spirited approach she brings to community service, teaching, research and publications. In teaching, she deliberately creates highly collaborative working environments with graduate and

undergraduate students. Most of her work addresses immigrant and visible minority experiences.

Dwayne Donald, PhD, University of Alberta

Dwayne Donald (Aipiomaahka) was born and raised in Edmonton and is a descendant of the Papaschase Cree. He taught social studies at Kainai High School on the Blood Reserve for ten years. He currently works as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. He is particularly interested the curricular and pedagogical significance of Aboriginal-Canadian relations.

Sharon Friesen, PhD, University of Calgary

Sharon Friesen's research interests include the ways in which K–12 educational structures—curriculum, learning and leading—need to be reinvented for a knowledge/learning society. She has specific interests in (i) the promotion of deep intellectual engagement, (ii) the ability to create learning environments that require sustained work with ideas and (iii) the pervasiveness of networked digital technologies that open up new ways of thinking, ways of working and tools for working and living in the world.

Dianne Gereluk, PhD, University of Calgary

Diane Gereluk is associate dean of Undergraduate Programs in Education at the University of Calgary, and associate professor in Educational Studies in Leadership, Policy and Governance. Her research examines primarily religious and cultural parameters in a pluralist society. She has taught in the areas of philosophy of education, educational policy and politics, and secondary social studies. She is author of *Education and Community* (Continuum 2006), *Symbolic Clothing in Schools* (Continuum 2008) and *Education, Terrorism and Extremism* (Bloomsbury, 2011). Her most recent book, coauthored with Lynn Bosetti, PhD, is *Understanding School Choice in Canada* (University of Toronto Press 2016).

Lindsay Gibson, PhD, University of Alberta

Lindsay Gibson is an assistant professor of Social Studies Education in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. His research focuses on historical thinking, history education and assessment of historical thinking. Prior to completing his PhD, he was a teacher in School District No 23 (Kelowna, British Columbia) for 12 years, where he taught secondary school history and social studies and worked on the district instructional leadership team. He has worked on a variety of provincial and federal history education projects with the Historical Thinking Project and The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC2).

Mryka Hall-Beyer, PhD, University of Calgary

Mryka Hall-Beyer teaches remote sensing (satellite image analysis) and general geography courses, including travel study courses, in the University of Calgary Geography Department. She currently directs the department's MGIS (master of geographic information science) program. Her previous lives include 17 summers as a Parks Canada naturalist in Québec, outdoor education and running an organic farm. She currently mentors Project Explorer, which places senior geography and geology undergraduates in schoolrooms as subject experts to help teachers with the "spatial" aspects of elementary social studies.

Craig Harding, PhD, Calgary Board of Education

Craig Harding works for the Calgary Board of Education, where he teaches junior high social studies. He is the coauthor of five textbooks currently used in the province of Alberta in addition to a series of books currently in press that explore social concerns. As well, he teaches online graduate courses in research methodology and issues in education for the University of New Brunswick. Much of his work focuses upon various aspects of history education, citizenship and democracy education and curriculum issues including the politics of education.

David Jardine, PhD, University of Calgary

David Jardine is a professor of education in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. He is the author of *Pedagogy Left in Peace* (Continuum 2012) and has an interest in how all knowledge, whatever the discipline, is ancestral and therefore unavoidably part of social studies.

Jennifer Lock, PhD, University of Calgary

Jennifer Lock is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. She has taught junior and senior high school social studies. At the university, her area of specialization is in educational technology. She has a keen interest in leveraging digital technologies to enhance communication, collaboration and creation of knowledge within the humanities, specifically in social studies.

Patrick Loyer, BEd, MA, Alberta Teachers' Association

Patrick Loyer is currently an executive staff officer with the Alberta Teachers' Association. He has an interest in social studies, particularly in the area of

First Nations, Métis and Inuit education. He has been a teacher and educator for 30 years.

Darren Lund, PhD, University of Calgary

Darren Lund is a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary, where his research examines social justice activism. He was a high school English teacher in Alberta for 16 years; in his rookie year, he formed an award-winning student activist program, Students and Teachers Opposing Prejudice (STOP). Darren is currently the "Welcoming Communities" domain leader with the Prairie Metropolis Centre, and has an interest in the topics of diversity, democracy and human rights.

Carla Peck, PhD, University of Alberta

Carla L Peck is assistant professor of Social Studies Education in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include students' understandings of democratic concepts, diversity, identity, citizenship, and the relationship between students' ethnic identities and their understandings of history.

Sylvie Roy, PhD, University of Calgary

Sylvie Roy is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. Her interests are related to languages, bilingualism and multilingualism, teaching and learning languages, and sociolinguistic issues. She is also interested in *la francophonie* in general and discourses related to French in Canada.

Stefan Sikora, PhD, Mount Royal University

Following undergraduate work at Notre Dame University, Stefan Sikora received a BA in history and political science, a BEd (with distinction) in social studies, an MA in native education and, later, a PhD in Aboriginal philosophy, all from the University of Calgary. He also did master's work at the University of Victoria as a research fellow in existential psychology. He later attended Cambridge University in Great Britain for postdoctoral studies in the field of the philosophy of education. He has worked as a school teacher and principal (in both the public and private sectors) and also as a college and university lecturer. He is the author/editor of a few academic texts and articles, as well as both published and unpublished books of poetry, novels, essays and plays. In 1980, his one-act play *Clowns* was nominated for a Governor General's Award. He has served as a keynote speaker and presenter at numerous academic conferences and workshops.

Amy von Heyking, PhD, University of Lethbridge

Amy von Heyking is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge. Her research areas include history teaching and learning, and the history of school curriculum. She is the author of *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (University of Calgary Press 2006). She is on the executive board of the History Education Network/Histoire et Éducation en Réseau (THEN/HiER), and a contributor to *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (UBC Press 2011) and to *The Anthology of Social Studies*, Vol 1 (Pacific Educational Press 2008). She is the author of a number of history teaching resources published by Scholastic Canada.

Cora Weber-Pillwax, PhD, University of Alberta

Cora Weber-Pillwax is an associate professor and program coordinator in the Indigenous Peoples Education specialization, Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. She holds a BEd in secondary English, a master's degree in international/intercultural education and a PhD in Indigenous peoples education. She has more than forty years of experience in Aboriginal education, and her recent work focuses on the significance of Indigenous knowledge in contemporary systems of health and education in Aboriginal communities.

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