

# ONE WORLD in Dialogue



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SOCIAL STUDIES COUNCIL of the ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



## Social Studies Council Executive 2016/17

**President**  
John Tidswell  
Bus 780-451-4719  
john.tidswell@ecsd.net

**President-Elect**  
Vacant

**Past President**  
Roland Zimmermann  
Bus 780-466-3161  
rolandhz@me.com or  
roland.zimmermann@ecsd.net

**Secretary**  
Sharon Richter  
Bus 403-782-3812  
srichter@wolfcreek.ab.ca or  
richters@shaw.ca

**Treasurer**  
Gary Hansen  
Bus 780-352-6018  
gbhansen@telus.net or  
hanseng@wrps.ab.ca

**Conference 2016 Director**  
Joy Wicks  
Bus 780-471-7987  
joywicks@shaw.ca

**Journal Editor**  
Craig Harding  
Bus 403-777-7870  
jcharding@cbe.ab.ca or  
jcharding@shaw.ca

**Newsletter Editor**  
David Scott  
Bus 403-220-2480  
scottd@ucalgary.ca or  
david.s@calgaryscienceschool.com

**Electronic Media Editor**  
Bryan Burley  
Bus 403-343-1354  
bryan.burley@rdpsd.ab.ca

**Website Manager**  
Bryan Burley  
Bus 403-343-1354  
bryan.burley@rdpsd.ab.ca

**Associate Webmanager**  
Roland Zimmermann  
Bus 780-422-3242  
rolandhz@me.com or  
roland.zimmermann@ecsd.net

**Alberta Education Representative**  
Janis Irwin  
Bus 780-422-3242  
janis.irwin@gmail.com or  
janis.irwin@gov.ab.ca

**University Representative**  
Carla Peck  
Bus 780-492-3751  
peck1@ualberta.ca

**PEC Liaison**  
Robert Twerdoclib  
Bus 780-963-2255  
robert.twerdoclib@teachers.ab.ca or  
twerdo@shaw.ca

**ATA Staff Advisor**  
Dave Matson  
Bus 780-447-9400 or  
1-800-232-7208  
dave.matson@ata.ab.ca

**Historica Fair Representative**  
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Bus 780-460-3712  
lois.gluck@spschools.org

### REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

**Calgary and District**  
Daniel Zeeb  
Bus 403-500-2082  
daniel.zeeb@cassd.ab.ca or  
dz4878@icloud.com

**Central Alberta**  
Suzanne Williamson  
Bus 403-782-3812  
suzanne.williamson@wolfcreek.ab.ca

**Edmonton and District**  
Rachel MacLeod  
Bus 780-426-2010  
rachel.macleod@ecsd.net or  
rachel21mac@gmail.com

**Northern Alberta**  
Andrea Willman  
Bus 780-538-3009  
andrea.willman@gppsd.ab.ca

**Southern Alberta**  
Matt Strikwerda  
Bus 403-320-7565  
matt.strikwerda@lethsd.ab.ca

### On the Cover (photo by Craig Harding)

The cover photograph was taken in Paris the day after the Nice truck terrorist attack. As I walked by the quartet playing outside several restaurants in the Latin Quarter, I couldn't help thinking about how odd it seemed for people to be playing music and enjoying themselves so soon after the attack. Even in dark times like this, Parisians do not lose their spirit, and I wondered how we would respond in Canada. This picture provided the impetus for how I could link the articles found in this edition of the journal. French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan defined a nation as the desire of people who want to live together—"avoir fait de grandes choses ensemble, vouloir en faire encore" (having done great things together and wishing to do more). I suspect that for the French, the challenges they have faced in recent months have not dampened the recognition of past accomplishments nor have they set limits on what they feel they can do—as Renan notes, the nation reflects their soul. The articles in this edition encourage you to reflect on the soul of education and, specifically, social studies. Let's continue to do great things together.

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# A Message from the Editor

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*Craig Harding*



## In This Issue

Welcome to the latest issue of *One World in Dialogue*. Our ATA Social Studies Council endeavours to provide relevant and up-to-date scholarly articles to keep social studies teachers informed and to ensure that our sub-

ject remains as an innovative and enlightened force in our province and across Canada. The quality of this publication is evident, as several other provincial associations provide their members with a link to the journal as a way to expand their subject-specific knowledge base. With a broad reach, we receive submissions that reflect the diversity of ideas and interests of scholarship across Canada.

While not intentionally seeking submissions on a particular theme, I hope that readers will be inspired to reflect on their practice. In his most famous essay, *What Is a Nation?*, Ernest Renan poignantly describes a nation as “a soul, a spiritual principle.” I think for most teachers this phrase would aptly describe teaching, as well. Renan notes, too, that a nation is “*un plébiscite de tous les jours*”—a daily plebiscite—a metaphor I suspect most readers would agree is applicable to teaching. Instead of citizens providing feedback on Renan’s “clearly expressed desire to continue a common life,” it is our students. Our practice evolves, ever attuned to the daily plebiscite our students provide. The articles in this edition of the journal provide a framework for this reflective evaluation.

This edition of the journal begins with Kent den Heyer’s thoughtful exploration of futures thinking. The purpose of education must be to benefit society; therefore, considering the common good is explicit. In fact, the Jules Ferry Laws of 1882, in France, established civics education as a primary goal of public education. While civic education is relevant to both present and future behaviour, the University of Alberta’s den Heyer specifically notes that states justify the demarcation of subjects as a necessary preparation for the future. With this in mind, den Heyer takes readers on a journey exploring what is meant by futures education. He distinguishes between tacit, token and taken-for-granted uses of the future that educators may utilize in their practice.

Citing comparative research, den Heyer investigates young people’s futures reasoning, noting despair as a common theme. Yet, this theme reflects their probable vision of the future, not their preferred view. The Alberta program of studies is noted for providing teachers with an opportunity to move beyond the dystopian view of a “divided,” “unsustainable,” “corrupt” and “violent” world, to instead consider ways to “arrive at decisions for the public good.” Intrigued by the conflict between what the program of studies describes and the attitudes of students, den Heyer embarked on research that explored teacher perceptions of futures education that provide us with an insightful *principe spirituel*, or spiritual principle, around which we can consider our practice. No doubt, the preferred future for students would reflect Renan’s notion of a “clearly expressed desire to continue a common life” rather than one that is unsustainable, violent and corrupt.

An intriguing article from graduate student Teresa Pigot-Upshall has us consider what happens when our educational philosophy confronts our reality. Pigot-Upshall has taught students ranging from prekindergarten to Grade 12 both in Canada and internationally. Her international experience prompted her to reflect upon how education is perceived and produced in such culturally responsive and diverse ways. As part of an independent qualitative research project, Pigot-Upshall explored divergent understandings of the differences between how teachers perceive their work and how their work is managed and controlled by various factors outside of their control. Her fascination with this topic is centred upon the interactions of student socioeconomic status and home life, as well as current policies in application around the world, such as standardization and accountability in education. This work has led Pigot-Upshall to pursue a second master's degree investigating how people interact with social policy.

Pigot-Upshall uses her experiences teaching in Asia as an anchor for juxtaposing what she was taught at university with the reality of experiences in the classroom. While recognizing that her education and experiences in Canada had little to do with her teaching reality, Pigot-Upshall describes the growth that occurred as a result of the daily *plebiscite* of teaching, especially the awakening understanding that behaviourism is not a theory that can guide the complex classes she faced. Instead, she describes the need to make teaching have a *soul*, a *spiritual principle*. As well, Pigot-Upshall wrestles with the tenets of neoliberalism, especially standardization, that seem to run contrary to the spiritual principle so essential to challenges she faced. Behaviourism and neoliberalism offered no solutions to the inequities her students faced.

Pigot-Upshall's reflections led her to espouse the need for a more holistic view of education, as opposed to the factory model around which much of schooling is organized. Although her article is not specific to social studies, the themes should be apparent to us, as the notions of equity, social justice and the common good are explicit in her work. Her conclusion is a testimony to the need we all have to reflect on our practice in order to have our students "desire to continue a common life." She notes that "To view all members of society through the neoliberal lens of 'survival of the fittest' reduces complex human social and economic issues to simple behaviourism and cruel simplicity."

Our consideration of education as a daily *plebiscite* takes us to considering what it means to have real or

authentic learning in the classroom. With a focus on the notion of developing a global classroom, the University of Calgary's Jennifer Lock and Sandra Duggleby relate two different projects that sought to explore what is necessary to develop a classroom that is participatory, collaborative and connected in an authentic manner to facilitate the development of global citizens. In the first instance, Lock and Duggleby describe research that investigated the cultural learning experiences of students in two different schools as they engaged in a technologically mediated inquiry that incorporated social studies and science goals. By using social media and other technologies, students from the two schools shared their thinking about issues in their own communities as well as global issues. Technology was not only used to communicate ideas but was central in knowledge building. Online discussions, data collection and sharing of images allowed students to interact with others in a way that was engaging and authentic.

The second ambitious enterprise, a six-week cross-institutional inquiry-based project, involved preservice teachers from Canada and Australia engaged in online discussions with peers, inservice teachers and teacher educators. Using a four-stage model, Lock and Duggleby outline that students "shared experiences, observations and resources as they investigated the topics of diversity and inclusivity within a global classroom environment."

Lock and Duggleby conclude their paper with meaningful ideas around which teachers can reconsider their practice—their *daily plebiscite*. With technology being affordable and ubiquitous, new opportunities exist for engaging students in authentic learning activities on a global level. While this requires teachers to take risks to reconsider their practice and provide opportunities for students to explore real world problems and cocreate knowledge by working with others, perhaps even in distant locales, the benefits are vast.

DJ (Daniel) Timmons, secondary social studies teacher in the Kativik School Board, in Nunavik, Quebec, submitted the final article. "Citizenship, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Addressing Core Concepts Through an Examination of Japanese Canadian Internment and Deportation During World War II" investigates many of the themes germane to social studies and provides us with a final look at themes Renan makes explicit. Renan explained that the two elements of our soul or spiritual principle "[lie] in the past ... (and) in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage

that one has received in an undivided form.” For Renan, history is central to our desire to continue a common life. He notes, “Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort.” Timmons explores concepts central to social studies such as critical thinking, historical thinking, citizenship and social justice through the lens of Japanese internment. The past actions of Canada’s government lead to exploring the need for a “common effort” and duty to address historical injustices, not only of the Japanese but also of other aggrieved peoples in Canada.

Timmons provides us with a comparative look at how the topic fits into the curriculum across Canada and a justification for exploring it in a meaningful manner. His approach embeds critical literacy into a class inquiry that supports the core concepts of social studies—and provides a *soul*, a *spiritual principle* to our practice.

The concluding submission is not an article, but rather an example of a teacher taking to heart an issue or grievance so challenging to the national soul that many

educators seek to find ways to rebuild bonds between conflicted communities. Inspired by the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Lacombe teacher Suzanne Williamson had her Grade 9 classes investigate Aboriginal rights, Indian residential schools and the legacy of those schools. Students soon realized that the project could become a way to share their dedication to promoting understanding toward Canada’s first people. As a result, students created two Reconciliation Quilts. The project culminated in hanging one quilt at École Lacombe Junior High School and presenting a sister quilt to Ermineskin Junior/Senior High School in Maskwacis, the site of a residential school. Students at both schools hope these quilts will symbolize compassion and empathy for all cultures and provide a strong bond between the two communities.

## Reference

Renan, E. 1996. “What Is a Nation?” In *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed G Eley and R G Suny, 41–55. New York: Oxford University Press. Available at [www.nationalismproject.org/what/renan.htm](http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/renan.htm) (accessed October 12, 2016).

## One World in Dialogue

The purpose of the journal is to provide professionals with relevant and scholarly literature with which they can engage colleagues in dialogue on current social studies concerns. 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.

The hope of the ATA Social Studies Council is that the journal remains one to reach for when social studies teachers are looking for latest scholarship related to curriculum, engaging pedagogies and deep understanding of how to support students’ learning in the multiple dimensions of our very progressive social studies curriculum. As well, the journal is a source of articles that creatively and critically take up important pedagogical issues and events in local, national and international contexts. 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. While *One*

*World in Dialogue* welcomes articles relevant to all components of social studies, those interested in making a submission should be cognizant of the classroom and scholarly focus.

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.

Manuscripts can be submitted for consideration via e-mail to Craig Harding at [jcharding@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:jcharding@cbe.ab.ca) or [jcharding@shaw.ca](mailto:jcharding@shaw.ca).

# Doing Better Than Just Falling Forward: Linking Subject Matter with Explicit Futures Thinking

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*Kent den Heyer*

## Abstract

States justify school subjects as necessary preparations for the future. Yet, while put to heavy rhetorical use, we know little about how (if at all) teachers connect a futures dimension to their subject matter teaching and learning. A futures dimension, after all, inheres in human deliberations ranging from our everyday decisions to the more refined claims made in, for example, historical scholarship. This article examines the use of futures as a rhetorical device, how science and social studies teachers take up the future and an example of how we might include such in classrooms.

## Implicit and Assumed Futures

Gough (1990) distinguishes between tacit, token and taken-for-granted uses of the future in educational discussions and documents. *Tacit* futures are of the implied type and never clearly stated: preparation for students' future adult life would be one example (eg, we need to grade to prepare kids for the real world). *Token* futures are more visible but consist of clichés, as can be read in many conference titles and curriculum documents: "The Future Is Now" or "Education for the 21st Century" and "2020 vision." Gough notes that "[w]hen one finds 'the future' (or a futures oriented reference) in the title of an educational

document it usually means much less than might be expected" (Gough 1990, 303).

Finally, *taken-for-granted* futures are the most visible of the three. With this type, people appeal to one vision of the future rather than acknowledge its many potential paths and manifestations. We hear this view of the future when commentators declare that education must continue to serve the economy rather than the other way around. Or, again, that students require a certain set of competencies in order to thrive in the future. In this taken-for-granted use, the future unfolds as more of the same that the speaker believes to be already the case. In all these three types, the future is ever present and never questioned as to its possible, probable and preferable manifestation. Fortunately, examples exist of more explicit engagements with the future.

## Futures Education

Australia in the 1980s and '90s was a hotbed of research into young people's reasoning about the future. Findings from this body of research suggest that *despair* most accurately describes young Australians' reasoning about the future (den Heyer 2009). For example, Hutchinson's (1996) study found a stark difference between secondary students' vision of "probable" and "preferable" futures, the former expressed with words such as

*divided, unsustainable, corrupt and violent*, and the latter with words such as *demilitarized, green, peaceful and equity*. To summarize his study of Australian 15- to 24-year-olds, Eckersley (1999) writes that “the future most Australians want is neither the future they expect, nor the future they are promised. Most do not expect life in Australia to be better in 2010. They see a society driven by greed; they want one motivated by generosity” (p 77). Examining this research, Hicks (2004) importantly notes that “whilst these young people come across as quite pessimistic about the probable future, their visions of the preferable future are quite inspirational *given that they also report little time spent on these issues in school*” (p 170; emphasis added).

Here in Alberta, programs of study include a futures dimension. For example, the high school front matter of the program of social studies grounds the subject in “learning opportunities for students to develop skills ... and the capacity to inquire, make reasoned and informed judgments, and arrive at decisions for the public good” (Alberta Education 2005, 5). On the same page, the program calls for “students to become engaged and involved in their communities by listening to and collaborating and working with others *to design the future*” and “creating *new ways* to solve problems” (emphasis added). On the following page, the program hopes to have “students [strive] to understand and explain the world in the present and to determine *what kind of world they want in the future*” (emphasis added). As noted by Hicks above, the lack of school time to explicitly engage future probabilities, however, likely continues here in Alberta and elsewhere in North America. My review of educational research, in both teacher education and subject-specific areas, finds that there is an absence of the future as an explicit topic of research. In addition, discussions reported below with practising Alberta high school teachers confirm what the Australian scholar Debra Bateman found in her case study. Despite government, curriculum and even school mission statements declaring a commitment to preparing students for the future, “prior to the commencement of this study, the teachers had given little thought to the ways in which they ‘educate for the future’” (Bateman 2012, 15). Rather, teachers assumed the “future would just occur” (Bateman 2012, 18). I turn now to explore the case for explicitly taking up the future in schools.

## The Future Dimension in Everyday Thinking

A future dimension along with the present and past inheres in everyday deliberation. Social psychologists Emirbayer and Mische (1998) detail three entwined “chords” at play in human thinking: reiteration, evaluation and projectivity. For example, if asked where I would like to go on vacation, I call upon my past experience (the chord of reiteration) so as to evaluate the present options in light of the future probable and preferable outcomes (the chord of projectivity). In fact, I can clarify the present evaluation of options and my preferable projected outcome—where I might want to go or might want to do—only by attending to each of these time dimensions or chords. As I move from one to the other chord, or imagine them concurrently, overlapping, the value of one or another vacation option becomes clearer in light of my also emerging preferred vacation.

We also play these chords when we deliberate with others over an explicitly political question that requires collective action. For example, we cannot socially evaluate the present without also thinking concurrently about a past we can reference (or, rather, we reiterate our historical knowledge about such) in light of projected possible, probable and preferable futures. To exclude a futures dimension in education, therefore, not only limits students’ evaluation of their present social lives, but also their judgments about how the past they encounter in and out of schools informs present social choices and future preferable destinations. Indeed, this dimension lies as the key reason that Alberta’s program of social studies includes a specific definition of historical thinking: “historical thinking is a process whereby students are challenged to *re-think assumptions about the past and to re-imagine both the present and the future*” (Alberta Education 2005, 9, emphasis added).

## The Role of Futures in Scholarship

Cronon (1992) examines the books of two US historians published in the same year, 1979. These historians “dealt with virtually the same subject” and “had researched many of the same documents, and agreed on most of their facts, and yet their conclusions could hardly have been more different” (Cronon 1992, 1347). Taking quotations from the two books these prominent



historians wrote and summarizing their findings, Cronon illustrates his argument that every historical narrative constitutes a value-laden creation:

In the final analysis, the story of the dust bowl was the story of people, people with ability and talent, people with resourcefulness, fortitude, and courage ... They were builders of tomorrow ... Because [of] those determined people ... the nation today enjoys a better standard of living (Bonnifield, in Cronon 1992, 1348).

The Dust Bowl was the darkest moment in the twentieth-century life of the southern plains ... The Dust Bowl was the inevitable outcome of a culture that deliberately, self-consciously, set itself the task of dominating and exploiting the land for all it was worth (Worster, in Cronon 1992, 1348).

How do two well-regarded historians dealing with the same archival sources and agreed-upon facts come to such different conclusions?

The facts do not themselves contain the lessons these historians draw. Rather, each threads the facts together in narratives woven out of their present concerns that animate why they initially bothered to go to the archive: “In both cases the shape of the landscape conformed to the human narratives that were set within it and so became the terrain on which their different politics contested each other” (Cronon 1992, 1362). These historical claims emerge as much from present concerns as they do from the past itself or the evidence by which we interpret it—not just a present concern, but also a more or less explicit future toward which these historians might have hoped their work contributes. The lesson I draw here concerns the role that the future plays in scholarly and teacher quests—our hoped-for contributions to a preferred future for which we seek the past as counsel rather than a future that just occurs.

## **Current Events, Darkened Futures**

Educators promote current events in science and social studies for a host of reasons. According to the Alberta program of social studies, “ongoing reference to current affairs adds relevance, interest and immediacy to social studies issues” (Alberta Education 2005, 6). Some teachers believe that current events help distracted students caught up in the immediate world of social networking, and adolescence more

generally, encounter the important news of the day. Others draw comparisons between a past and a current event or problem being studied to provide relevance to each. Others may use current events to promote media literacy and the multiple points of view through which we can interpret any one event or controversy involving science (eg, climate change). These are all good reasons. We do need to attend, however, to several limitations in the use of current events. These became apparent in my study investigating the ways science and social studies teachers link their subject-matter teaching with a futures dimension. In this study, I conducted one-hour interviews with eight secondary teachers, asking them how they envisioned the role of futures in their subject matter teaching. A discourse analysis of interviews revealed emergent themes within each interview (each treated as a separate case study). These themes were then compared and contrasted across cases to reveal more comprehensive or inclusive themes (Limberg 2008). Another researcher verified the descriptive reasonableness of themes identified and supporting interview data.

For Mj, current events give the past, but not the future, relevance:

Mj (second-year social studies teacher): I was able to make the link between the Ukraine crisis and the French revolution thanks to a tidy [newspaper] article that someone wrote who said “just as in 1789 ...” Unfortunately people are dying in this revolution as well, but for me as a teacher I am always trying to make it relevant for my students. I mean these kids might find it [the past] boring, [so] why are we talking about this? So it is important to make those links.

Mj points to a common use of current events that all interviewees share and that reflects its justification for inclusion in the program of social studies. Lacking a futures dimension, however, this use of current events just as likely paints a picture of an already determined and unchanging present as much as the events’ analogous relevance.

One unexpected finding in this study was the extent to which the absence of a future dimension abandons students to a further sense of a deeply distressed present:

Bill (22 years teaching social studies): If there is discussion about future then it’s probably all doomsday stuff, you know all the glaciers will melt and we will all die of something bad. That

is probably how the future is dealt with in social studies, in a fairly negative way. If I am teaching current events and trying to explain how the world ended up this way and why it will turn out in one way rather than another then there is a lot of negative. It is hard sometimes. It is like a newspaper, you know, it's all bad news. There is a lot of bad news and maybe that is what we all collectively do in our classrooms.

Here Bill points to the possibility that while the content of a current event may change, the tone and depiction of a troubled present remain the same. This use of current events to explain “why [the world] will turn out one and not another way” forecloses both the future as a relatively open time-space and exploration of more hopeful possibilities, likely contributing to students’ despair about preferable futures as noted in the Australian studies summarized above.

From this study, it seems that the future consists in these classrooms, at best, as a type of “what if?” musing:

KdH: Are you linking these events to future probabilities or future outcomes?

Mj: Just through discussion. We might talk about what does society look like if we do this or that. But it's only through informal discussion. If the discussion doesn't lend itself to that question, I don't go there ... We try to make a wee bit of a connection to “what if?” and that's about as far as we go with the future.

Jyle speaks to the present difficulty of getting beyond this type of “what if?” musing:

KdH: Do you get students to consider the future probabilities of, say, racism that you mentioned as one of your concerns as both a citizen and teacher?

Jyle (an eight-year social studies teacher): No, not usually, because that is a much harder kind of idea to get to. Usually, in lieu of asking them to consider the future and where our choices could lead, I will give them an example of where we might be going. You know, like, “Are we going to continue down this path ... about how we classify each other?” It gives them a little to think about as they go forward.

For Martha, a 17-year social studies teacher, the future's horizon in her teaching extends only to the end of the school year:

Martha: We don't focus on the future. We focus on the now and the yesterday. That is far as I go. When I start with the kids on the 30th of January, guess what I'm focusing on? The 14th of June! Because that's when their diploma [exam] is.

Later in the interview, Martha observes that perhaps this emphasis needs to be expanded:

We do think about the future in a personal perspective; but so rarely do we think about it in a cognitive or political or historical perspective.

I read Martha's comment as speaking to our profession's emphasis on helping individual students to succeed (as if such success does not require a broadly considered social analysis) that narrows possible foci on social futures:

Mj: This semester, I have former AP [advanced placement] kids. Their sense of the probable and preferable future is very different from the kids I taught last year. Like last year they [those students] are not going to university. They are going to work in trades or restaurants but is that what they want for themselves, is that their preferable? I don't know, but they don't know anything different, right?

Kate's thought captures well these insights into both the paucity of explicit subject-matter futures and a cultural reflex to speak of the future in individualistic terms:

KdH: What role does the future play in your teaching?

Kate (eight years teaching secondary science): I've never thought to ask them about the future. I only thought to present information as it exists now and look at historical trends. The only time we talked about the future [was] to communicate that they're in it as the primary focus and I'm not. It has to be a torch passing. That's the only time.

In this way, we limit the future's unfolding to the potential horizon of the personal and individual, not a question requiring a collective analysis and shaping. Where, then, are student opportunities to connect content knowledge to futures more broadly and explicitly considered?

## Scenario Reasoning

Given its lack of explicit and open investigation in teachers' classrooms, how might we promote and take

up a futures dimension linked to subject matters? I will take the case of history, which many people think is about the past. This despite evidence noted by Cronon above that the past is only known through those histories we write or speak to convey some lesson for a hoped-for future. Rather than directed to the past, historian David Staley (2002) argues that teachers could develop students' historical reasoning equally well by having them articulate future scenarios. Scenarios differ from predictions: "Where a prediction is a definitive statement about what will be, scenarios are heuristic narratives that explore alternative plausibilities of what might be" (Staley 2002, 78).

Having students think about future scenarios calls upon their historical reasoning in terms of both subject content and historical thinking skills as articulated by the US National Standards for History: "to raise questions and to marshal solid evidence in support of their answers"; to "create historical narratives and arguments of their own"; and to "examine the interpretive nature of history" (National Center for History in the Schools nd). Staley invites us to consider the ways we might enhance historical thinking by exploring arguments about future probabilities. Our collective hope for a preferable rather than just a probable future requires that we extend our engagement with students beyond simply arriving at reasonable judgments about some past incident to include creativity and desirous imaginings animated by the study of future possibilities.

Like any disciplinary study, scenario work begins with clearly articulated questions that emerge out of a classroom, school or the community's pressing issues of concern, to which the Alberta program explicitly calls upon teachers and students to attend. Such questions are "throughline" questions (den Heyer 2009b). I distinguish throughlines from essential questions. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) define an essential question as "a question that lies at the heart of a subject or a curriculum ... and promotes inquiry and uncoverage of a subject" (p 342). Rather than questions at the heart of a subject, throughlines are provocative questions that call for ethical responses requiring multidisciplinary frames of analysis as found in social and science studies. Such questions might range from the more local to the more general; from "To what extent, if at all, will bullying continue in our school?" to "What is the future of the Arctic and of the Inuit people there in regards to land claims, hunting rights and sovereignty?"

After identifying their throughline questions, teachers and students scan the environment looking for what

is called "driving forces" that are "key factors that will determine (or 'drive') the outcome of the scenario" (Staley 2002, 79). Here, "evidence" is identified in much the same way that historians work with artefacts from the past to explain events: "Like evidence from the past, evidence for the future is not intrinsically evident. It is made evidence by the historian's mind acting upon it" (Staley 2002, 84). Sources of evidence include current events and a range of media in which teacher and students identify a driving force necessary to take into account in constructing scenarios. Here the past becomes meaningful both as (a) an indicator of past experiences and influences of driving forces and (b) differing interpretations of said driving forces and their plausible future outcomes. Of course, also considered are the unpredictable influences on the issue played by human agency, accident and uncontrollable environmental conditions.

Once a question has been identified, the present environment scanned for driving forces and historical content introduced by the teacher as potential analogies, students write the story of each scenario (Staley, in his review of the literature on scenario writing, suggests a minimum of three. I suggest *possible*, *probable*, and *preferable* to emphasize the future's malleability). Each scenario has a plot that "describes a different, but equally likely, logic of the future":

The narrative of each scenario does not describe a linear procession of events ("this will happen on this date, then this will happen"). Rather, the scenario is a description of the context within which those events may occur (Staley 2002, 84).

Once articulated, scenarios—and the historical interpretations used to support their plausibility—also provide opportunities for students to distinguish between probable and preferable futures. Such a discussion provides students practice with articulating their ethical commitments as agents of future social life.

## Summation

A future dimension inheres in our everyday decisions and our more refined disciplinary judgments. Yet, the future's presence in these deliberations likely lacks explicit attention in schools, as evinced by the absence of the question in North American educational scholarship and studies confirming that the future, while invoked by various official documents, remains unexamined. In my study with eight excellent

practising secondary teachers, none thought to tie a student exploration of our collective futures to their subject matter. Rather, the future exists either as “what if?” musings or is limited to a concern for their students’ personal work and academic outcomes.

Understandably, teachers feel pressed to trace a path from the past to present or explain analogous realities between the two. In doing so, we also likely convey an unintended message that the present inevitably followed a single path from that past, akin to the ways some speak of the “taken-for-granted” future as an already given. Absent a futures dimension, teachers’ use of current events can reinforce students’ already existing taken-for-granted pictures of “just the way it is/as it has always been/will always be.” Current events are useful, of course, but perhaps less than we think without an explicit exploration of those currents in which these events flow between past, present and possible futures. Without such an exploration, perhaps the cumulative effect is to heap another event on the pile of “one damn thing after another” under which many students despair for their preferable visions of our shared social future.

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# How Standardization and Behaviourism Foster Inequality in Public Education: A Comparative Experience

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*Teresa Pigot-Upshall*

Although the risks and contradictions of life go on being as socially produced as ever, the duty and necessity of coping with them has been delegated to our individual selves.

—Zygmunt Bauman

## An Empty Vessel

Nearly five years ago I came to Asia with the goal of gaining experience working in education. At a time where my experience and contact with children was fairly limited beyond volunteer work in the past, I went into teaching with the assumption that all children start life as an empty vessel. Aristotle's empty vessel theory, though originating as far back as the 4th century BCE, still plays major role in thinking about child development today, giving no regard or consideration to the notion that the home life, learning environment, stress, health, parenting and socioeconomic status (SES) could affect how a child learned. Educationalists, led by John Locke, believed that the child's mind was a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate. Fresh out of university and equipped with the latest theories of learning, I accepted this belief for the first few years of teaching in early primary and kindergarten classrooms on the Thai island of Phuket. This accepted truth of children as empty vessels, blank slates,

worked well until my first-hand experience with learners suggested that it was a short-sighted view of a complex process.

In Phuket, a great many of the children I taught came from homes where their mothers migrated from the poorest parts of Thailand. In an effort to earn money and provide for their extended family, the majority of them moved to Phuket, the richest province in Thailand, to work in the tourism industry. Often, these women entered the job of "bar girl" with the dream or goal of finding a foreign man to financially care for their extended families, settle down with and have more children. These mixed families make up a large demographic in Phuket.

Teaching their children always brought joy and inspired me in my work. I felt that I was contributing to the well-being of a new generation of less-impooverished children, providing them with important cognitive skills and the increased opportunity that these skills can bring. At times, there was a profound sense of sadness as I found that the children were not as responsive to educational stimuli as I had expected. Various issues with learning, speaking, reading and emotional management continued to arise. I remember one day asking my boss, a British woman who was the mother of a bright, talkative and confident little boy, why some of these kids seemed to be lagging behind others. She said quite simply, "These mothers, they just don't speak to their



kids at home and when they do interact, the mothers are often harsh. They just don't make conversation, or read to their children. The fathers put them in preschool in order to counteract what happens at home." Her response became an ongoing conversation that we would have throughout my formative years of teaching in Phuket. Back in my classroom I would continue to reflect on her words, noting how certain students came to school with what seemed to be low levels of learning readiness. I still reflect on these discussions in my current role as a high school teacher at an international school. While I teach students of all nationalities and backgrounds, I continue to find it startling that the gaps in their learning have ostensibly persisted into the later years of their lives. As teenagers, students who have not found success in school embody an attitude and negative self-perception that form a complex barrier to learning. When asking students about their home life, it continues to be apparent that certain requisite factors are necessary to ensure students' success at school. The absence of these factors diminishes the level of school readiness, nearly assuring a challenging educational experience. These observations conflicted greatly with the behaviourist notion that all students started life as equivalently empty vessels.

## **One Assumption Precedes the Other: Behaviourism**

Like others, I assumed that human beings begin their lives as empty vessels that uniformly adapt and experience environment, stimuli and learning. This historical assumption established the belief that students experience knowledge in the same way, and thus have equal access to the benefits of education. Concurrent with this, behaviourism establishes that all students will respond to rewards and punishments, thus establishing foundations for teaching and learning. The empty vessel that is filled by teachers at an early stage in life is same empty vessel that can be conditioned through a system of punishments and rewards. Indeed, behaviourism, a paradigm of psychology that was popular between the 1920s and the 1950s, was based on the tenet that a person's behaviour can be conditioned through a system of punishments and rewards. The simplicity of this notion appears to be popular with teachers who are just starting out. Perhaps most teachers start with this assumption, but many find that behaviourism provides little lasting gain and change in individuals. This uniform assumption—that all humans are empty vessels and

respond to stimuli and experience rewards and punishments in the same way—is demonstrably erroneous. In classrooms around the world the twin sins of behaviourism operate to attempt to motivate children to work to earn the gold star, for example, as opposed to learning as a goal of education, while providing mundane and overly simplistic means of behaviour management in the classroom.

## **Behaviourism and Neoliberalism: Misguided Assumptions of Standardization and Uniformity in Public Education**

In our current neoliberal environment, behaviourism juxtaposes well with current policy trends. Behaviourism is embraced by neoliberal and conservative policymakers, who seek to treat actors within education in a uniform, one-dimensional way. Indeed, it is easier to understand complex human processes when they are broken down into numbers. Ravitch (2013) has found that this wide application of behaviourism is detrimentally applied to public education, as is the concept of measurement of productivity gains (p 2238). Ravitch (2013) asserts, "But children are not corn. They are not seeds or plants with fixed characteristics. Children's lives are not static ... They are not empty vessels waiting to be filled by a teacher" (p 2243). The idea that all behaviour, no matter how complex, can be reduced to simple stimulus presupposes an overly simplistic conception that "schools ... operate like factories that turn out identical products" (p 5561). And, with this perspective in mind, overzealous policymakers apply this rationalization to making the school responsible for fixing complex inequalities in society. Therefore, with a behaviourist mentality, an expectation and assumption that school can "fix poverty," for example, or that "effective teachers" can "produce excellent education for all" applies incredible expectations and uses rewards and sanctions to elevate standardized test scores as the ultimate measure of education quality (Ravitch 2013, 464). Conversely, the effect of rewards and punishments on North American students has reduced the quality of education, which has led to narrowing of curriculum and the betrayal of other important skills and qualities of students, in favour of "teaching to the test."

The utility of behaviourism was popularized over a quarter-century ago in Great Britain with the rise

of neoliberal policies and the changes that derived from these policies. Indeed, the simple quantification of human activity was a major draw to applying conservative neoliberal policies and thinking to complex human problems. The simplistic premise of behaviourism is concerned primarily with observable behaviour that can be objectively measured; conversely, this application removes any complexity behind the behaviour, ignoring the cause or circumstances causing the behaviour, in exchange for simplicity and acquiescence. Researchers Harris, Smith and Harris (2011) strongly advocate for the removal of behaviourist thinking from education policy. They believe that this thinking has permeated the education system in the US, because “Just as a worker’s actions are broken into the simplest steps in order to maximize output, so a student’s learning is broken into observable (ie, measurable) parts, which are in turn manipulated through punishments and rewards” (Harris, Smith and Harris 2013, 73). Indeed, within the neoliberal’s toolbox are a few blunt instruments that have been used continuously to manage and standardize the public education system. As Harris et al (2013) assert, “The tests and the scores they generate are seen as levers to be used to move the education system along. Policy makers try to use those levers to move educators and students ... to take action ... [through] threats of punishments and promises of rewards” (Harris, Smith and Harris 2013, 72).

The tests and the levers Harris, Smith and Harris refer to derive from a system well situated in the belief that students are empty vessels that can be filled with information and tested repeatedly using the same test model—standardized. Standardization has grown in popularity in the treatment of teachers and their work, which is managed by the neoliberal policies with the aim of producing uniformity that can be objectively measured and narrowly evaluated.

## **Educators’ Perspectives: Public Education, Uniformity and Complexities of Learning**

Recently, scholars have noted that the trend toward standardization is realized in the new neoliberal buzzword: *professionalism*. This involves breaking professional practices into a series of overly simplified competencies or technical skills that can then be standardized and, as we see in the US, even assessed through simplistic teacher evaluation

checklists. While it is shocking that teachers’ work is assumed to be akin to that of a factory worker, promoting this perilous analogy of teaching and learning as a production-line process makes teaching a series of technical acts while ignoring the reality that teaching really is a moral profession and is even the soul of education. By breaking down teaching into skills, neoliberals seek to establish a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching, necessarily biased against educational philosophy that seeks to explore potential or “what we could do.” Breaking down education to determine best practices or investigating successful schools to see what makes them effective fails to contextualize our practice. Instead, there is an assumption that what works in one effective school is transferable to all.

Yet teaching should remain a morally driven profession that would not benefit from standardization and behaviourist-style manipulations. Using a behaviourist system that sanctions low-performing, “less effective” schools is simply ignoring the biggest indicator of academic success—socioeconomic status (SES). Schools in low-socioeconomic areas, for example, would be at a huge disadvantage and would be punished for external factors beyond the control of teachers. Conversely, neoliberal education “reformers” ignore much more socially and economically entrenched factors tied to learning—differences in how the rich and the poor experience learning.

Indeed, neoliberal policymakers assume with incredible naivety that standardized tests have the power to close achievement gaps. Foster’s research (2011) argues that standardized testing is indeed not only not what is best for educating students, but produces results/data that “measure success” for politicians seeking to shrink spending on public programs and privatize education (p 25). A simplistic education of students is preferred to more complex models, and the uniformity of the factory model used in education has increasingly limited ability to provide students with a wide range of learning possibilities that enrich the lives of students and give them a sense of belonging. Low-SES students are at a greater risk of exclusion when faced with narrow education policies that favour accountability that derives from high-stakes standardized testing, for example, over high-quality holistic education.

When governments and policy makers opt to apply uniform standards and expectations, they ignore critical differences. Standardization, uniformity and the perpetuation of the belief that all students are empty

vessels ultimately challenge the work of educators at the very core. As colleague Jarrett Spannier notes,

I would imagine that it would be much easier to simply ignore the issues that get in the way of students' learning as if they weren't there. I would sleep much easier if all I had to do was give tests and expect that each student should be able to perform equally because their community/family/ability contexts didn't matter. The fact is that this simply isn't true and a student's context outside of school does affect how they are able to perform in school. Each student's school experience is fairly similar, so the variables in their lives come from their genes and from their lives outside of school. We have to understand where the students come from, and adapt instruction and activities accordingly, but we cannot expect that each student will perform or learn or value equally. If they did, it wouldn't be teaching any more.<sup>1</sup>

The expectation of students to perform and learn uniformly, as empty vessels, is inaccurate and misguided. Research on low-SES students and language usage cited by Marsh (2011) indicates that a three-year-old child of a professional couple has a vocabulary of around 1,100 words, whereas the three-year-old child of a couple on welfare has a vocabulary of 525 words. Marsh (2011) makes the powerful assertion that language usage and vocabulary are critical to many other aspects of learning and experience throughout one's life trajectory because these skills influence IQ, test scores, job interviews and so forth. It isn't too hard to imagine how far behind a child starts if the child's parents are on welfare or otherwise living in poverty. This information suggests that when children come to school from different socioeconomic backgrounds, their background affects their ability to perform at a level equal to their higher-SES peers, which has a cumulative, inequitable impact over a lifetime. Indeed, the simplistic behaviourist perception of the child as an empty vessel betrays the value of human experience in both teaching and learning.

## **Broadening Curriculum to Meet the Goals of Education: Building Noncognitive Skills and Social Capital**

Currently the majority of students and teachers in the public school system will encounter more

standardized testing than their predecessors, all for the sake of accountability and the ease of measurement. Educators in the above discussion mentioned the importance of their relationships with their students, and how these relationships are an integral part of their work. Chang and Liou (2008) find benefits of the relationship between teachers and students particularly of value for students from low-SES backgrounds, who benefit more from the higher levels of trust that these relationships promote, which leads to an increase in feelings of inclusion and the building of social capital (p 111). These relationships are critical and speak to the moral nature of teaching, as the current standardization movement puts more emphasis on students from low-SES backgrounds having to succeed on these tests. This leads to a narrowing of the curriculum for students who would benefit immensely from a wider, more holistic educational offering. The inequity perpetuated in high-stakes testing and standardization has been cited in a report from the Center for American Progress that found that urban high school students spend as much as 266 per cent more time taking standardized tests than their suburban counterparts (Mulholland 2015, 2). When students are forced to focus heavily on activities based on testing, it not only narrows curriculum but also has a proclivity to decrease meaningful interaction between students and curriculum, students and teachers, and students with each other.

Educational researchers and economists have defended education practices that include a wider curriculum that speaks to the goals of education. In her policy work on why noncognitive skills should be taught in public schools, Garcia (2014), an economist, found that a broader curriculum promotes various skills, including noncognitive dimensions that indirectly build cognitive skills (p 15). For example, Garcia (2014) found that time spent on test preparation could be used more constructively to develop interpersonal and noncognitive skills through group projects, which have been found to cultivate skills such as collaboration, critical thinking and communication among high school students (p 15). Garcia cites research by Rothstein, Jacobson and Wilder (2008), who concur that nurturing these skills is both an implicit and explicit goal of public education, so that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds should have access to the ability to build traits such as persistence, communication skills, creativity and teamwork, among many others (p 7). The importance of developing these skills not only shows the value of wide curriculum that provides various opportunities

<sup>1</sup> Online class post from Jarrett Spannier, March 12, 2016.

for valuable interactions and learning, but is a testimony to how, even when faced with achievement gaps, students can overcome cognitive gaps through noncognitive skill development.

Noncognitive skill research that also focuses on the development of social capital for students from low-SES backgrounds is highly important in the current test-centric system of learning. The skills that standardized tests gauge are perhaps not as valuable to students as neoliberal policymakers may presume. For instance, if a significant goal of education is to prepare students to find work to benefit their lives and become productive members of society, then a goal of education is, without a doubt, to prepare students for work. There is a strong disconnect between the goals of standardized testing and the emphasis placed on narrow knowledge, and the skills students need to be successful and productive in their adult lives. For instance, from analyzing surveys from employers, Garcia (2014) found that the ranking of the desired skill set needed for entrants' workforce readiness are oral communication, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic and critical thinking/problem solving (Garcia 2014, 9). According to Garcia, more than 90 per cent of employers surveyed declared these skills to be "very important," in contrast to writing, mathematics, science, and history/geography, which were ranked 6th, 15th, 16th, and 19th respectively out of 20 skills (p 9). Indeed, it is true that few occupations rely heavily on basic academic knowledge developed in school settings—and the fact that employers stress the value of noncognitive skills in the workplace speaks to both those skills' overall impact and the need for policy makers to readjust their perceptions of what it means to be ready for college and employment (Garcia 2014, 10). Students' interacting more actively with their peers and teachers, while experiencing different types of learning, helps them to forge positive connections with their school community and increases a more positive self-identity. The current system, which expects that an emphasis on testing will close achievement gaps, neglects the value of relationships, community and the connectivity required to foster social capital in low-SES students.

## **The Interrelated Complexities of the Achievement Gap and Socioeconomic Status**

It is indeed reassuring to know how teachers' relationships with students, student connections with

the community and the building of noncognitive skills can help students overcome the challenges they face related to economic inequality. The achievement gap can be narrowed through noncognitive skill development, which is an important concept considering that, contrary to the blank-slate theory of child development, children enter school with cognitive gaps that can persist into the twelfth grade (Sadowski 2006, 1). The "achievement gap" is now a term that has been widely appropriated by neoliberal education reformers that seek to convince the public that standardized testing alone has the power to close these gaps. This is evidenced in the Ontario education minister's defence of the use of standardized testing in Ontario (EQAO), citing that it is "An important assessment for students, educators, and the public as we work to close the achievement gap in Ontario" (Rushoway 2015, 1). The beliefs of education reformers are misleading—the United States Department of Health and Human Services (2003) has consistently found that this achievement gap is present before children enter school and it continues to use research to understand the critical period of learning and development from birth to age five (p 1). Indeed, researchers like Sadowski (2006) have found that these gaps could be halved if the "differences that exist before entering first grade could be eliminated" (p 1). Considering that achievement gaps are present before children enter school, the antiquity of the notion of the child as an empty vessel or blank slate continues to be realized and played out in the daily lives of students and teachers.

Certainly the achievement gap is more complex than what can be found on standardized testing and other narrow measures of "success" for schools and students. Garcia (2014) notes that researchers have continuously found that SES acts as a mediating variable for the effects of other mechanisms that affect skills acquisition, so aspects such as parenting behaviours and engagement, access to higher-quality early childhood care, and parents' work habits and intellectual interests emphasized in the home facilitate how children develop their ability to learn (p 11). It is an unrealistic and overly simplistic expectation by government and policymakers that students would respond to such behaviouristic motivations of standardized testing policies. The government and various reform movements have responded to this critical problem in education through ignoring the complexity of the issue and instead finding ways to make teachers and testing responsible for closing it through the use of a system of punishment and sanctions. Ravitch

argues that neoliberal policies that favour accountability “delay the steps necessary to heal our society and help children, [while] castigating and demoralizing teachers for conditions they did not cause or control” (Ravitch 2013, 2048). Indeed, teachers and schools are greatly affected by the assumption that they can produce the same amount of learning for all the “same” students.

Educator and researcher John Marsh (2011) finds that the original American policy, *No Child Left Behind* (2001), and the policies that followed utilized heavily misguided conceptualizations of economics and inequity in making teachers responsible for the achievement gap when they “placed all their income-leveiling eggs in one basket: education” (p 13). Marsh’s concern strongly correlates with the assumption that children are empty vessels, of which more testing or more schooling can indeed create a uniform impact so large that whole income gaps can be closed by education. Marsh (2011) warns that

As a nation we have decided that education, and often enough education alone, will reverse increasing economic inequality and boost the poor out of poverty. With so much at stake—life and death, sickness and health, opportunities and lack of opportunities—and so much to lose, that is a momentous bet to make. (p 64)

Foster (2011) warns that these policies do little to address the real problems in society, because “To adopt a conservative, ‘no excuses’ philosophy toward the achievement gap is to close one’s eyes to the fundamental reality – child poverty” (p 22). In her work with Canadian youth in the current education system and the ongoing effects of the EQAO, Kearns (2011) has found that such “at-risk” groups are more inclined to experience exclusion, which leads to higher levels of students leaving school early, perpetuated by increased high-stakes testing in schools across Canada (p 114). When considering why lower-SES children do not fare as well academically as well-off children, Marsh (2011) asks his readers to consider how a student living under optimal conditions has easy access to academic success and overall success in life:

Reverse all that—parental affluence, excellent childhood health, unencumbered performance in school, adult property, and excellent health as an adult—and you have a situation that goes far toward explaining why poor people have worse health (and lower incomes) than those with higher incomes and better health. You also have an

explanation for why poor children tend to remain poor and why rich children tend to stay rich. (p 57)

Reflecting on this quote and the research reminded me of my time as a kindergarten teacher in Bangkok after leaving Phuket. In Bangkok I worked at a high-quality kindergarten for Japanese and British students. The differences between the students at this school and the one in Phuket were striking, though the curriculum and teaching were quite similar. Generally, the students at the school in Bangkok had parents who were older, educated and involved in their child’s learning and the school community. These children had strikingly different health and overall well-being than those in Phuket, who were, in contrast, often sickly, highly emotional or just not as healthy as they could be. The students in Bangkok were fit, well dressed, clean and healthy. These students were reading nightly with their parents, and were engaged in extracurricular activities that worked to develop both cognitive and noncognitive skills. It is apparent that children enter school with very different backgrounds that, more often than not, hinge on socioeconomic status, as we all know.

## **Inequities from the Start: Child Cognitive Development in Low-Socioeconomic Homes**

The schools in Bangkok were experientially astounding for me. As an educator I was now fully aware of the fact that children were not entering the classroom as empty vessels ready to be filled with knowledge. Of course there were variations in my limited experience, as indeed a few of the students in Bangkok had emotional and behavioural disorders, and several of my students in Phuket were highly intelligent and brilliant communicators. As an educator, my beliefs reflect those of most teachers who seek to engage all students regardless of background and skill set. I do not have to be incentivized to teach my students, as is suggested by neoliberal dogma. Instead, I derive great professional pride in working with all of my students to help them build self-sufficiency, skills and self-confidence. Among other concerns, it is here that neoliberal policies are misguided. Teachers don’t need to have incentives or punishments to work hard. Policies should instead be motivated to close equity gaps in society. Neoliberalism works to remove public funding and privatize government programs that strengthen the community and bridge socioeconomic



gaps. These tenets of neoliberalism, though dominant government policies today, should be re-evaluated based upon wider notions of what it is to teach and learn.

With the continued implementation of education reform of neoliberal sentiment, the underlying theme of “survival of the fittest” reproduces inequality in the public education system for students from low-SES backgrounds. Researchers Strelitz and Lister (2008) found that in the UK, where the education system has experienced continued management by neoliberal policies, the direct relationship between family incomes and children’s outcomes is increasing (p 69). Inequality permeates learning for low-SES children. According to Friedli (2009), students who show initial positive academic adjustment yet come from low-SES backgrounds are still more vulnerable to faltering due to weaker support structures at home and in the community (p 29). Friedli (2009) extended her research to how inequality is expressed in testing outcomes; she reported that students that come from low-SES backgrounds who show high cognitive skills with above-average reading skills do worse in standardized tests than economically privileged children with lower reading skills (p 29). Perhaps standardized testing is not the best means for assessing students, as existing disparities mean that not all students can expect to achieve on tests at the same rate. Ravitch (2013) asserts that “In every nation ... the achievement levels of students from low-SES backgrounds fall short of their more advantaged peers” (p 2047). The continued correspondence between students from low-SES backgrounds struggling with the education system illustrates the complexity of how these factors come together to produce inequalities for students who are engaged in a system that increasingly applies uniform expectations and standardization.

Scholars continue to uncover how different factors contribute to the neurological development of children from differing economic backgrounds. Marsh (2011) cites research by Harvard’s University Center on the Developing Child that has found that when children live in inequality, it “literally disrupts brain architecture” and “that effect is on top of any damage caused by inadequate nutrition” (p 57). Sanders (2008) also cites a study from the *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* that found startling evidence that children from lower SES backgrounds aged as young as 9 to 10 showed brain physiology patterns similar to someone who actually had brain damage in the frontal lobe as an adult (p 1). This study found that these patterns contributed to low response to cognitive

stimuli and also the effects of damage to the prefrontal cortex, affecting the ability to apply critical thinking, problem solving, behavioural control and creativity (Sanders 2008, 1). Another group of researchers, at the University of British Columbia, found that 5- and 6-year-olds from low-SES environments had specific neurological development issues that were evident in higher rates of impaired executive functioning and poor problem-solving and reasoning abilities (Sanders 2008, 1). These cognitive and noncognitive skills are absolutely critical to success in education.

Researchers of neurological development in children refer to the setbacks these children face as *cognitive impairment* (Sanders 2008, 1). This, explain Hart and Risley (2003), is critically related to exposure to language in the home. Hart and Risley explain that the effects of the home learning environment, stress and parenting affect student outcomes in school. Not only are there massive gaps in the number of words heard by children ranging across ranges of class, but there are also significant differences in how parents speak to children in relation to their early development. Hart and Risley (2003) found that the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback than discouraging feedback, compared to an average child in a low-SES family, who would have accumulated 125,000 more instances of prohibitions than encouragements (p 9). Their work on the word gap is strong evidence that it is impossible for the child to be an empty vessel, because children come to school bearing the consequences of their SES and home learning environment on their early childhood development. The researchers state that “The magnitude of the differences in children’s cumulative experience before the age of three gives an indication of how big the problem is” (Hart and Risley 2003, 9). Thus, one can appreciate that the bigger picture of the stress of home life for low-SES families and how it affects a child’s physical and language development in relation to the child’s readiness to learn is one that is complex and widely misunderstood.

## **The Need for Change: A Wider Application of Learning and Perspective of Education**

As researchers like Ravitch continue to find evidence and assert that assumptions of uniformity of student learning not only place unreasonable expectations on teachers and students, they are also

“antagonistic to public education” through diminished funding and standardization practices perpetuated in the “factory model” (Ravitch 2013, 529). Perhaps it is important to consider the issue through a broader lens that accounts for the development of noncognitive skills, community and health. For example, the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health has found that investing in holistic child development has the “huge potential to reduce health inequalities within a generation” and can also “close achievement gaps in education that start in early childhood” (World Health Organization 2008, 59). If the aim is truly to close the achievement gap, as neoliberal policymakers and government expect schools to do, then a wider understanding of the complex interplay of the causes of the achievement gap must be considered and valued. Researchers continue to find new ways to improve the chances for all children, regardless of socioeconomic background. For instance, the health care system can support education; a study by Sloat et al (2014) found strong evidence that supported the benefits of paediatric primary care providers providing low-SES parents with reading-promoting interventions (p 14). Health care workers can also provide parents with information and the knowledge of how to improve their child’s outcomes, for instance, conversing with their child in the home on a daily basis, which Desforges and Abouchar (2003) found had a direct effect on increasing achievement in school (p 21).

Providing parents with the knowledge, tools and access to the social capital of community and professional intervention not only builds child health, it also works to benefit children throughout their lives. This is evident in the *Jamaican Supplementation Study* that found that when parents received child development support in literacy, home life and nutrition, children in the stimulation treatment group had benefits that substantially effected their cognitive and noncognitive skills in late adolescence and, later on in life, their adult earnings (Gertler et al 2013, 16). That the effects of adult earnings and success across the life trajectory are tied to noncognitive skill development is also substantiated in the Perry Preschool Programme, which provided high-quality kindergarten experiences that sought to improve noncognitive skills as well as cognitive (Gertler et al., 2013, p. 25). Though there was no lasting effect on child IQ, the study did find that the participants had better direct measures of noncognitive skills, leading to employment opportunities and increased income, than the

peers who did not receive the treatment (Gertler et al 2013, 25). This study illustrates the importance of helping children become more actively engaged in social-capital-building activities as critically recognizing that we must look beyond narrow cognitive expectations for student learning and help students develop valuable noncognitive skills.

When education is viewed as an integral part of child development, and the school as a place of holistic learning, policymakers can endow trust and respect in the work of teachers and students. When schools and learning are exposed to stringent management of teaching, standardized testing and unrealistic expectations of student uniformity, the public system suffers and is increasingly damaged by these practices. As neoliberal politics continue to ignore social and economic factors endemic to student achievement, gaps will continue to widen. Students, parents and teachers need a more intelligent design of learning than a “factory model” and the use of standardized testing to narrowly measure achievement. To view all members of society through the neoliberal lens of “survival of the fittest” reduces complex human social and economic issues to simple behaviourism and cruel simplicity.

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# Authentic Learning in the Social Studies Classroom: Connecting Globally

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*Jennifer Lock and Sandra Duggleby*

## Abstract

Students in a global classroom engage in learning that is participatory, collaborative and connected. By designing and facilitating authentic social studies learning for such environments, students are able to develop a greater understanding of who they are as global citizens. In this article, authentic learning, contemporary learning, and affordances and selection of technology are examined. Two examples of projects provide insight into the depth of learning, the integration of technology and how the role of the educator changes when using a global classroom approach. Five guidelines are presented to support designing and facilitating learning in a global classroom.

## Introduction

The Internet is giving students and educators access to a new learning landscape that goes beyond the physical space of an educational institution. In this new landscape, students are able to engage in authentic learning opportunities in social studies classrooms where they can inquire and engage in conversations and collaborations with experts and other liked-minded individuals. They are not bound by time and/or geographic location. Rather, through the affordances of digital technologies, students and educators are able to work in a global classroom defined and shaped by their

interactions and collaborations. Designing and facilitating authentic learning in social studies through a global classroom approach enables students to develop a greater understanding of who they are as global citizens. Further, they will also develop an appreciation for the participatory nature of learning within technology-enabled learning environments.

This article examines authentic learning within a contemporary educational context. The review of the literature examines authentic learning, contemporary learning, and affordances and selection of technology with regard to designing and facilitating learning for the global classroom. Two examples provide insight into the depth of learning, integration of technology to support learning and how the role of the educator changes when working in a global classroom. In conclusion, the article presents five guidelines for designing and facilitating robust authentic learning in social studies classes using a global classroom approach.

## Authentic Learning

*Authentic learning* is often referred to as students engaging in a real-world application. According to Newmann and Wehle (1993), when learning is authentic the achievement “is significant and meaningful,” in contrast to something that is “trivial and useless” (p 8). They created the following three

criteria to identify authentic instruction: “(1) students construct meaning and produce knowledge, (2) students use disciplined inquiry to construct meaning, and (3) students aim their work toward production of discourse, products, and performances that have value or meaning beyond success in school” (p 8). These three principles become a framework to guide how social studies teachers can create such learning experiences for students.

Within an authentic learning context, the emphasis is on knowledge creation. The intentionality of authentic learning “brings into play multiple disciplines, multiple perspectives, ways of working, habits of mind, and community” (Lombardi 2007, 3). Working with real-world problems is complex and messy. Authentic learning experiences provide opportunities for collaboration and reflection, and should be integrated across disciplines (Herrington, Oliver and Reeves 2003). “Students must be challenged with authentic tasks that drive the need to use, transform, apply, and reinterpret that information” (Woo et al 2007, 38). This type of learning has value for the individual student, as well as for the members of the community of learners.

Newmann and Wehle (1993) developed five standards to assess the authentic instruction:

- *Higher-order thinking* “requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications, such as when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation” (Newmann and Wehle 1993, 9).
- *Depth of knowledge* occurs when students “make clear distinctions, develop arguments, solve problems, construct explanations, and otherwise work with relatively complex understandings” (Newmann and Wehle 1993, 9).
- *Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom* has students involved in learning in a greater social context. The connectedness involves students addressing real-world public problems/issues or making direct links to their personal experiences (Newmann and Wehle 1993).
- *Substantive conversation* includes extensive interaction that engages higher-order thinking skills, development of ideas that involves unscripted exchanges, and fostering of shared understandings through dialogue (Newmann and Wehle 1993).

- *Social support for student achievement* occurs when expectations are established for students that include the need to “take risks and try hard to master challenging academic work, that all members of the class can learn important knowledge and skills, and that a climate of mutual respect among all members of the class contributes to achievement by all” (Newmann and Wehle 1993, 11).

Newmann and Wehle’s five standards provide a framework to guide the design of learning tasks in which students are intellectually engaged in inquiry that requires examination of multiple perspectives and thinking critically in their assessment of information. Further, they are intentionally engaging with others through purposeful and sustained discourse as part of constructing meaning or finding possible solutions to the problem.

## Contemporary Learning in Social Studies Classrooms

Technology plays a critical role in support of contemporary learning. Friesen (2009a) argued that 21st-century learning “is better conceived of as ensuring students have the competencies required to fully participate in and make meaningful contributions locally, provincially, nationally, and/or globally, not for someday in the future, but now” (p 7). Further, according to Darling-Hammond (2008), effective “[e]ducation must help students learn how to learn in powerful ways, so that they can manage the demands of changing information, technologies, jobs and social conditions” (p 2). As students in social studies classrooms develop 21st-century skills or competencies to live well in today’s technologically fast-paced society, they need opportunities to see themselves and their learning in a larger authentic context.

When students in social studies are engaged in authentic learning that uses a global classroom approach, it influences how they see themselves as global citizens. According to Lee et al (2013), students can develop character and values by exploring issues that connect to their everyday lives through global citizenship. They found that it is important to “encourage students to participate in real life community issues with their peers and teachers as collective members of the community thereby deriving a shared satisfaction from the experience of their actions” (p 2107). Through their actions, they are making a difference and contributing to knowledge creation. This, in turn, affects who they are as global citizens.



By designing learning that engages students in real-world problems within the social studies context, they develop the needed knowledge and skills for today's complex society. As recommended by Woo et al (2007), "[s]tudents must be challenged with authentic tasks that drive the need to use, transform, apply, and reinterpret that information" (p 38).

By confronting students with uncertainty, ambiguity, and conflicting perspectives, educators can help them mature their thinking and make them able to use problem-solving approaches effectively ... To be competitive in the global job market, students must become comfortable with the complexities of real-world problems. (Saxena 2013)

Thomas and Brown (2011) asked the question "What happens to learning when we move from the stable infrastructure of the twentieth century to the fluid infrastructure of the twenty-first century, where technology is constantly creating and responding to change?" (p 17). They argued that in today's world, "[n]ew media forms are making *peer-to-peer* learning easier and more natural" and "[p]eer-to-peer learning is amplified by emerging technologies that shape the *collective* nature of participation with those new media" (p 50). Therefore, social studies educators need to carefully consider how they can design authentic learning tasks for students in which they are working in peer-to-peer technology-enabled learning environments that are not bounded by physical geography or time.

## Affordances of Technology

Students are more likely to become better-engaged and motivated learners when they are provided with opportunities to "critically examine local and global issues and act upon them" (Lim 2008, 1089). With the use of technology as a tool or means to construct their own understandings, students are able to form conclusions based on their own findings and experiences. Through meaningful dialogue in social studies classrooms, educators are able to facilitate the creative thinking process by supporting and empowering students to make their own discoveries. "In the process, they learn to use technology as a tool for data collection, manipulation, and communication rather than as a passive device for direct instruction" (Lucey and Grant 2010, 128). Technology plays a critical role in helping students not only to gather information but also to collaborate, communicate, present and represent their ideas as part of knowledge creation.

Students and educators in today's social studies classrooms have access to an array of asynchronous (eg, discussion forums, blogs, wikis) and synchronous (eg, video conferencing, virtual meeting forums, instant messaging) communication technologies, including a variety of social media applications (eg, Twitter, YouTube). "Using collaborative technology to extend the physical borders of the classroom can be of significant value. However, it does not guarantee that the students will either learn or 'collaborate'" (Larusson and Alterman 2009). The challenge is how educators design the experience so that students are using the technology in meaningful ways in their engagement in learning.

From the literature, there are various studies that highlight how technology can be integrated to support rich student learning experiences. For example, Lord and Lomicka (2014) used Twitter to engage students in authentic and appropriately designed learning tasks. In their work, students shared resources and developed a sense of camaraderie. They collegially developed ideas, asked questions, shared ideas and problem-solved using Twitter. In another study, Otrell-Cass, Khoo and Cowie (2012) found that capturing live moments on video provided opportunities to discuss, reflect and observe actions so that multiple solutions to problems could be identified. When learners reflected on the most relevant ideas noticed in a video, it provided opportunities for others to voice opinions and arrived at the best solution. A third example was in Edwards's (2014) study, which also found that the implementation of social media contributed to knowledge building. This study made evident that students could understand perspectives of others and collaborate on ideas by using the most appropriate technology for the task. By engaging in autonomous learning activities, students were able to demonstrate evidence of learning through a wide range of performance data using technology. These three examples demonstrate how such technology can extend and enhance the student learning experience.

## Purposeful Selection of Technology

The use of technology to support authentic learning is not a matter of using what is convenient or what is most comfortable to use by the educator or the students. Rather, it requires intentional selection that best supports the robustness of the learning. "When we take the stewardship of the intellect seriously as an educational charge, students are given the opportunity

to think differently each time they use digital technologies” (Friesen 2009a, 8). As such, the design of the learning task requires “appropriate and pervasive use of educational technology” (Jacobsen, Lock and Friesen 2013, 18).

The following three studies illuminate the need to carefully think about not only the technology selection but also the influence of multimodality on the learning experience. First, in a study in which Facebook was used, O’Bannon, Britt and Beard (2014) reported that the use of Facebook provided no benefits to student achievement. Students perceived that Facebook was not suitable for educational purposes, but rather for interacting on a social level. Using what is socially popular may not be what is required to support the inquiry or what is required for learning. Second, Shanahan (2012) contended that audio is an important mode of communication with the use of digital software. Instead of using sound as an add-on or an embellishment when communicating in a digital context, students were encouraged to use sound to affect the meaning of a multimodal presentation. For example, using the sound of an avalanche to accompany the video of an avalanche has more impact than each on its own because of the connection to the affective domain. Shanahan found that communicating with sound in a meaningful way has a powerful impact on making relevant connections in learning. This example begins to denote the influence of multimodality (eg, audio and visual) on student learning. Third, Madden, Jones and Blanchard (2013) suggested that photo narratives assisted students in relating their own experiences to the content that was being learned. They found that growth in learning and a community of sharing was promoted when students shared the perspectives of others and self-reflected through photo narratives. Purposeful selection of appropriate technology allows for greater enhancement of student ideas and connects them to real-world learning experiences.

## **Learning Social Studies Through a Global Classroom Approach**

When learners actively engage in relevant inquiry-based learning relating to the world, it is important to make the necessary global connections to help foster the construction of knowledge (Joyce, Calhoun and Hopkins 2002). The global classroom provides an opportunity for students to engage in learning that

is participatory, collaborative and connected. With recent advances in technology, classrooms are becoming a part of an emerging world of global learners, where students cocreate knowledge (Lock, 2015). For example, we have the ability to be in the moment, learning through such actions as watching world events unfold, singing with a Canadian astronaut who was living in the International Space Station or exchanging ideas as part of collaborating on a project with others from across hemispheres. Digital technologies afford students the opportunity to connect and interact in various ways. Having access to the technology is only part of the equation. The thoughtful design of the learning, the careful scaffolding and facilitation, and the purposeful use of the technology are what is needed for learning to be effective when using a global classroom approach.

The element of participatory learning is taken up when student actions can contribute to building a community of values and practices worldwide. Cooperation between the countries can help students cocreate knowledge (Lock 2015) to solve ecological problems and discuss issues such as preservation of animals, population growth and natural disasters. Students can also analyze the underlying decisions about international cooperation and collaboration. For example, trade agreements and the exporting and importing of goods can also be discussed between the groups of students in various locations around the world. Such learning provides students with opportunities to engage in the global community and to develop a greater understanding of global issues. Further, it also helps them to develop an appreciation of who they are as global citizens.

When students are connected digitally, they can work collaboratively to create ideas that are expected to be published in online spaces (Jacobsen, Lock and Friesen 2013). While students are working with experts in the field and building this knowledge, learning is taken beyond the classroom walls. Jacobsen, Lock and Friesen (2013) pointed out that it is central for learners to know that their contributions are important and that they matter. They also found that students improve when they receive comments and feedback from others, which generally results in a product that is of publishable quality. Lock (2015) suggested that it is important for the work to be authentic, collaborative and interactive to achieve the learning of curricular outcomes. Further, an important part of the process is the self-reflection that relates to the real-world cultural experience of cocreating knowledge. All of these components can lead to

changes in a community when students become engaged citizens and present their ideas to others.

The *2014 NMC Horizon Report: 2014 K-12 Edition* reported two key trends with the adoption of educational technology in school: “rethinking the roles of teachers” (Johnson et al 2014, 6) and the “shift to deeper learning approaches” (p 8). Johnson et al also noted that one of the serious challenges that affect the adoption of technology is “creating authentic learning opportunities” (Johnson et al 2014, 20). These three factors guided the discussion of the following two examples in which we, as educators and authors of this paper, designed authentic learning opportunities in which students were engaged in learning using a global classroom approach and developed a greater sense of global citizenship: (1) a cultural learning experience between two elementary classrooms and (2) a cross-institutional inquiry-based learning project using a four-stage process in which preservice teachers had the “lived experience of being online learners and online collaborators” (Lock and Redmond 2011, 25).

## Learning of Our Cultures

Students from two elementary schools located in different communities were engaged in a cultural learning experience in which they communicated with each other using Google Docs and e-mail. These students participated in cultural activities relating to the social studies and science learning goals. Through hands-on activities, students learned about an Indigenous culture, Ukrainian Easter egg decorating, weaving, and culinary experiences from Peru, India, Tunisia and Ukraine. With the use of social media and other technologies, students from the two schools shared their thinking about issues in their own communities as well as global issues.

Technology played a key role not only in communication but also for knowledge building. For example, in science, students engaged in thoughtful conversations through e-mail regarding the life cycle of the butterfly. The students compared and contrasted their data on their butterfly’s growth from an egg to the release into the wild. Through their online discussions, data collection and viewing of time-lapse photography, students came to the conclusion that a warmer classroom sped up the process of the eggs developing into larvae, then forming the chrysalis and finally emerging as butterflies. Through the use of time-lapse photography, students were able to share and discuss the life

cycles of their butterflies with each other. The hands-on experience of these students along with sustained conversation led to deeper learning. This knowledge building and cocreation of knowledge occurred through thoughtful discussion in e-mails and Google Docs.

The final project was a documentary of the year’s learning through the creation of an iMovie. Photos, videos, music and dialogue of events throughout the year depicted student learning through the cultural events in the program. This included learning about a particular Indigenous culture through the eyes of an elder. The final project video demonstrated the learning that had occurred throughout the cultural learning experience. When students reflected on the most interesting aspects of their collaborative journey, they shared these insights through e-mail with their peers in the other school.

In this cultural learning experience, it was imperative for teachers to communicate effectively using the digital technology. It was also important for teachers to engineer effective tasks and provide feedback so that the students could own their learning and share instructional resources with one another (William 2007). In the planning stages, the teachers designed appropriate tasks that were meaningful and significant to both groups of students. These well-thought-out lessons were purposefully created for knowledge building with the use of digital technology. Through well-planned lessons, the students became engaged in their own learning and the teachers became facilitators of this learning.

The project required teachers to help students to develop technological skills so they could be successful working with their peers at a distance. For example, all students needed to be taught the skills of using e-mail for communication. Students were then assigned a “buddy” from the other classroom and each learned appropriate e-mail etiquette before they e-mailed one another. The next step was to ensure that all students learned the skill of sharing knowledge through the use of Google Docs. This meant teaching each student the steps in creating and sharing a document and then allowing others to edit and comment on the work. Once the students learned these skills, they were able to communicate effectively with their buddies in the other school. This rich interaction between students using technology in the cultural learning experience empowered them to build knowledge together. As a result, they developed an appreciation for the differences in various cultures.

## Exploring Diversity and Inclusivity

A cross-institutional inquiry-based project occurred over six weeks that involved preservice teachers engaged in online discussions with peers, inservice teachers and teacher educators from Canada and Australia. The project was designed using the following four stages, in which preservice teachers shared experiences, observations and resources as they investigated the topics of diversity and inclusivity within a global classroom environment (Lock and Redmond 2011; Redmond and Lock 2009).

- **Stage One—Community Building.** Preservice teachers developed their online presence through meeting peers from both countries. As they introduced themselves, they were also developing confidence in using the learning management system (Lock and Redmond 2011; Redmond and Lock 2009).
- **Stage Two—Learning from a Shared Experience.** Each preservice teacher read one of four stimulus novels related to the themes of diversity and inclusivity. Within novel-based teams, the preservice teachers wrote a review of the novel and identified links with regard to pedagogical implications and curriculum. Further, they developed inquiry questions designed to initiate discussions about the novel and the project themes. This information was posted in the online environment. The novels created the foundation for a shared experience, which acted as a catalyst to launch the online discussion. A selection of inquiry questions were used in a series of discussion forums. The two teacher educators facilitated a structured initial discussion among the preservice teachers (Lock and Redmond 2011; Redmond and Lock 2009). The asynchronous communication technology accommodated the time difference when working with people in two different hemispheres.
- **Stage Three—Learning from Teachers as Experts.** Invited inservice teachers joined the discussion forum in the learning management system. These teachers had expertise in such areas as cultural diversity, second language learners and teaching in an inclusive classroom. Discussion forums were created for each of the areas of expertise. Within each forum, teacher experts from both Canada and Australia engaged in discussion with preservice teachers.

From the information provided by experts, the preservice teachers were willing to share their experiences in depth, and continued to question to gain deeper knowledge of the key concepts and issues. Interestingly, the preservice teachers also kept linking the discussion with the concepts from the stimulus books. (Redmond and Lock 2009, 270)

Further, synchronous opportunities were provided in which for an hour one teacher expert, the teacher educators and all preservice teachers who wanted to attend could engage in conversation. An activity used in the synchronous session was a discussion of a real-world scenario related to one of the themes from each novel. This scenario activity required participants to discuss the teaching and learning issues and implications and to provide strategies for how they would address such a situation in their teaching practice. From this experience, preservice teachers identified areas or topics for further learning as part of their professional growth plans (Lock and Redmond 2011; Redmond and Lock 2009). The synchronous discussion forums augmented the asynchronous, providing a space in the learning where interested individuals could meet to explore a topic and allowing spontaneous interaction.

- **Stage Four—Critical Reflection.** Preservice teachers posted their reflections in the online environment. They reflected on their personal experience as online collaborators and inquirers into issues and practices that affect teaching and learning. Their reflections were focused both on process and content. By posting their reflections, they shared with their peers both what they had learned from the experience and next steps in their learning (Lock and Redmond 2011; Redmond and Lock 2009).

With this example of working in the global classroom, the teacher educators were the codesigners and cofacilitators of the learning experience. The design of this project required that they open up the learning landscape by inviting other educators, with particular expertise, to join the learning experience. This models how the online environment can be used to create a space where individuals can be invited into the learning. It illustrates teachers being open to bringing in the necessary expertise to support student learning and that, in this type of environment, the educator needs to be able to work as a facilitator of learning.

## Guidelines for Designing and Facilitating Learning in the Global Classroom

From the review of the literature and from the authors' reflection on our personal experiences, we have developed five guidelines to support the design and facilitation of learning using the global classroom approach.

- First, there needs to be an intentional design in planning the social studies inquiry that supports robust authentic learning. Newmann and Wehlege's (1993) five standards to assess the authentic instruction provide a helpful framework to guide the design process.
- Second, given the nature of the learning, students and educators need to purposefully select technology that best supports the specific goals of learning. This may initially require working outside a person's technological comfort zone. To learn what works best for each situation may involve asking colleagues what they have used, talking with students to gain their input, consulting with the technology lead teacher or expert and/or taking risks by experimenting with new technology. Using the most appropriate technology will enhance and enrich the nature of the learning experience.
- Third, there is a need to have responsive facilitation of the learning that nurtures the inquiry through new and emerging questions. These questions need to be taken up in a way that advances the depth and breadth of the learning yet bounds the experience so that the focus of the learning is not lost.
- Fourth, educators need to have the skills necessary to be able to provide supports and scaffolding to help learners collaboratively engage in knowledge creation within technology-enabled learning environments.
- Fifth, assessment is a "seamless part of the learning process" (Friesen 2009b, 5). Assessment practices, according to Friesen (2009b) need to be "clearly focused on improving student learning and guiding teaching" (p. 4). Assessment is an integral part of the design of the authentic learning experience. Students need to be aware of the assessment criteria so they can be used to inform and guide their work. Ongoing feedback to the students also helps the educator be responsive to the learning by providing the necessary scaffolds in support of knowledge building in social studies.

## Conclusion

We are not bound by bricks and mortar within contemporary social studies classrooms. Rather, the affordance of digital technology opens a new learning landscape that offers new possibilities for how we engage students in authentic learning experiences. Designing and facilitating authentic learning for the global classroom is complex. It requires a degree of risk taking in opening up teaching practice to such ideas as learning through real-world problems or providing students with the opportunity to cocreate knowledge by working with other peers and experts, who may be located in various geographic locations. It requires careful deliberation by educators and students in terms of selecting appropriate technology to support the various elements of learning. With careful planning and facilitation in terms of the learning task and assessment, along with the purposeful selection of technology, there is a wealth of opportunity for what can be learned in social studies using a global classroom approach.

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# Citizenship, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Addressing Core Concepts Through an Examination of Japanese Canadian Internment and Deportation During World War II

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*D J Timmons*

It sure has been a long time since I was in Canada. It's two years and a half of unpleasant surroundings and unfamiliar faces. Most of all is the suffering of hardship, hoping that tomorrow I'll be in Canada but that tomorrow has not yet come ... There is no other thing to do but wait for the time and the day I could go back to Canada.

—Exiled Japanese Canadian teenager writing from Shikoku, Japan in 1948. British Columbia Archives, Winifred J Awmack Collection.

Distant conflicts of the 1940s had a catastrophic impact on the Nikkei<sup>1</sup> community in Canada. During the Second World War, persons of Japanese ancestry in British Columbia experienced the “most dramatic expression of racism in Canadian history” (Ward 2002, xiii). More than 20,000 people were uprooted and removed from their homes, and few would ever return. Following the official surrender of Japan to conclude the war in 1945, the Canadian government attempted to deport over 10,000 members of the uprooted community before eventually yielding to pressure from Canadians concerned with civil liberties and citizenship. The government halted the deportation programme, but not before almost 4,000

were sent to Japan (Adachi 1976; Kage 2012; Sunahara 1981).

The focus of this paper is how inquiry into the Japanese Canadian internment and deportation during and following the Second World War can help students examine issues of citizenship, human rights and social justice while developing critical literacy and historical thinking in the Canadian social studies classroom. The subject of Nikkei internment and deportation is multifaceted and has a rich historical record; there is, therefore, great potential to incorporate various artifacts, accounts and perspectives into class activities and discussions. With the increasing availability of digitized historical documents and photographs through online public archives, primary documents are available to students as well as to the practicing historian. Using these resources in the classroom can help students actively develop historical thinking so as to read as historians do.

One of the main roles of social studies is citizenship education, because students in a liberal democracy will become responsible for making decisions on public policy issues as adults (Darling and Wright 2008; Wolk 2003). Issues of citizenship are immediately apparent in an examination of the Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> Persons of Japanese ancestry.

Canadian internment and deportation, in that more than 17,000 of the entire uprooted Nikkei community in Canada were legally Canadian citizens (subjects of the British Empire), and of those exiled to Japan after the war, 66 per cent were also Canadian citizens (Canada Department of Labour 1944). The treatment of Nikkei during their uprooting and dispossession by the Canadian government, the years of internment in isolated British Columbia camps, and the postwar federal deportation orders all relate directly to issues of human rights (Adachi 1976). The postwar deportation orders inspired a public outcry and a legal challenge to the Canadian government, which illustrates the emergence of social justice consciousness across the country (Bangarth 2008). These issues provide excellent opportunities for social studies teachers to incorporate historical thinking strategies and critical literacy into their classes, especially pertaining to issues of “race, culture, class, gender, media, and the environment in the hope of creating a more just, humane, democratic, and equal world” (Wolk 2003, 102). In the sections that follow, I will provide some ways for students to develop this deeper social awareness of their responsibilities toward shaping our future society.

## Critical Literacy and Historical Thinking

Literacy is important in all subject areas, and content-area teachers play a significant role in their students’ literacy development (Alger 2007, 2009; Draper 2002; Heller and Greenleaf 2007; Lind 2008; MacPhee and Whitecotton 2011). This paper adopts a sociocultural perspective, viewing literacy as a set of “social practices” (Gee 2007; Lankshear and Knobel 2003; New London Group 1996), and incorporates literacy into its approach to teaching, focusing on social justice in relation to literacy acquisition (Alger 2007, 2009; Freire 2000; Gee 2007; Keyes 2011; Robertson and Hughes 2011).

While this topic provides multiple opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, defined by Bailin et al as “thinking through problematic situations about what to believe or how to act where the thinker makes reasoned judgements” (as cited in Darling and Wright 2008), the focus in this paper is on critical literacy teaching and learning strategies. Teachers incorporating critical literacy strategies into their pedagogies endeavour to engage students in a critical examination of a variety of texts, and society

itself, and call for empathy and compassion in order to help students become better world citizens (Alger 2007; Keyes 2011; Wolk 2003). Wolk explains that critical literacy “is about how we see and interact with the world” and helps students see “dominant power themes in our society and world, such as racism, sexism, corporate and media hegemonies, and the effects on the environment of individuals and systems” (Wolk 2003, 102). Its purpose “is not to tell students what to think but to empower them with multiple perspectives and questioning habits of mind,” (p 102) encouraging them to make decisions that shape a better world. Teachers may have to “rethink their usual practices,” (p 103) moving beyond the course textbook and using a variety of supplemental resources to make controversial issues a regular component of student-centred, inquiry-based learning.

When lectures and textbooks dominate history classroom instruction, as opposed to more active learning activities, students may develop a false impression that history is about the memorization of facts. Seixas and Peck (2008) argue that history education requires much more than remembering dates, people and events and warn that students should not be “swept in” by narratives in historical films, reconstructions, fiction or other single-perspective accounts. They believe that students should be given the opportunity to engage critically with historical narratives and develop historical thinking (p 109). Historical thinking aids historical literacy, defined as “gaining a deep understanding of historical events through active engagement with historical texts” (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness 2014). The Historical Thinking Project, of which Seixas and Peck are executive committee members, believes that “historical thinking—like scientific thinking in science instruction and mathematical thinking in math instruction—is central to history instruction and that students should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling” (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness 2014). Nokes (2010) also believes that history teachers must promote in students the “ability to negotiate and create interpretations and understandings of the past using documents and artifacts as evidence” (p 66). In classrooms where this occurs, “students are invited into the community of practice and learn how to negotiate and create the texts that are valued by historians” (p 57). Walker (2006) also argues that understanding history requires historical literacy and that analyzing a document’s meaning through the perspective of a historical actor

and the actor's culture gives students an opportunity to "develop a historical understanding" (p 31). The Nikkei experience in Canada is well suited for developing historical thinking among students, and as relevant historical documents are becoming increasingly available through online sites there is great potential for teachers to develop engaging student-centred activities.

Critical literacy and historical thinking conceptual frameworks both aim to make learning active, rather than passive, and provide opportunities for students to engage critically with course material. Social studies teachers can promote this kind of learning by building historical literacy through instruction and inquiry with authentic historical texts (Nokes 2010) and by providing active learning opportunities so as to prepare students for full democratic participation. Like teachers passionate about reading, who nurture a classroom environment that values reading, teachers who practise critical literacy in their daily lives can pass these practices on to their students (Wolk 2003).

## Curriculum Connections

An exploration of the Nikkei experience in the Canadian social studies classroom addresses a number of curricular outcomes from various provinces in several subjects. The issues related to the internment and deportation of Nikkei correspond directly

to the guiding principles of western Canadian public education (Western Canadian Protocol 2000), which aim for students to gain essential citizenship skills and to critically examine diverse perspectives and foster "a sense of social compassion, fairness, and justice" (p 7). Also, the program rationale and philosophy of the Alberta social studies kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum (Alberta Education 2005) includes "respecting differences and fostering inclusiveness," as well as respecting "individual and collective rights" (p 5). The subject also fits well within the Ontario Ministry of Education's Canadian and world studies curriculum (2015) with the vision for students to become "critically thoughtful and informed citizens who value an inclusive society (p 8). The Atlantic Canada social studies curriculum includes links to the essential graduation learnings of citizenship, in which students are led to "consider the principles of human rights and ... develop criteria for a just, pluralistic, and democratic society and learn to recognize the hybrid nature of their culture and the interdependent nature of our world" (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation 1999, 6–7).

The following sections will use critical literacy and historical thinking approaches to consider the themes of citizenship, human rights and social justice within a study of Nikkei internment and exile. Table 1 summarizes sample concepts, curriculum outcomes, resources and teaching ideas that might be used in such a unit of study. These examples will be further explained in the sections that follow.

**Table 1:** Selected examples of curricular outcomes addressed through a critical examination of Nikkei internment and deportation from Canada in 1946

Big Ideas (Sample Questions)	Samples of Curricular Outcomes	Critical/Historical Literacy
<p><i>Citizenship</i></p> <p>Why were Japanese Canadian citizens uprooted, interned, and exiled from Canada?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the Nikkei community pose a threat to Canada?</li> <li>Did being of Japanese ancestry make them any less Canadian citizens than Italian and German Canadians?</li> </ul>	<p>Alberta</p> <p>Social Studies 20-1 (Alberta Education 2005)</p> <p>1.11 evaluate the importance of reconciling nationalism with contending non-nationalist loyalties (religion, region, culture, race, ideology, class, other contending loyalties) (p 21)</p> <p>2.7 analyze nationalism and ultranationalism during times of conflict (internments in Canada) (p 22)</p>	<p>Provide students with the opportunity to critically examine two primary documents that informed Nikkei in British Columbia that they were to be removed from their homes. These documents began the process, which eventually led to the attempted deportation of 10,000 Nikkei. See Appendix B.<sup>2</sup> See also related historical photos in the Vancouver Public Library's collection at <a href="http://guides.vpl.ca/japanese-canadian">http://guides.vpl.ca/japanese-canadian</a> (accessed November 22, 2016).</p> <p>Have students complete primary source evaluations to critically analyze the documents and their impact on society, using templates developed by the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia.</p>

2 Editor's note: The original historical documents were accessed from [www.najc.ca/thenandnow/experiencec\\_removal.php](http://www.najc.ca/thenandnow/experiencec_removal.php); however, this site is no longer available.

<b>Big Ideas</b> (Sample Questions)	<b>Samples of Curricular Outcomes</b>	<b>Critical/Historical Literacy</b>
<p><i>Human Rights</i></p> <p>What happened to the Nikkei community when they were uprooted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was life like in the internment camps?</li> <li>• Why were Nikkei families separated during their uprooting?</li> </ul>	<p>Nova Scotia</p> <p>Canadian History 11 (Nova Scotia Education 2002)</p> <p>J2 demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between land and culture and analyze the effects of displacement (p 114)</p> <p>J4 demonstrate an understanding of how the lack of political and economic power has led to inequities and analyze the responses to these inequities p 118)</p>	<p>Engage students in online archival research on the Nikkei community on the websites for Library and Archives Canada, British Columbia Archives, and Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre Archives to find relevant photographs of the Nikkei community's uprooting between 1942 and 1949. Have students each present one image to the class and discuss the photo's relevance and why the student chose it, what was happening at that time, a description of how the student located the source and the source citation.</p>
<p>Can the Canadian government uproot, dispossess and relocate groups of people today?</p>	<p>Ontario</p> <p>Canada: History, Identity and Culture. Grade 12, University Preparation (Ontario Ministry of Education 2005)</p> <p>D3. Diversity and Citizenship: analyse challenges facing various groups in Canada between 1867 and 1945 as well as the contributions of various groups and individuals to the development of identity, culture, and citizenship in Canada (p 371)</p>	<p>Students use the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to debate whether the experiences of the Nikkei community could happen to other ethnic groups today. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is available at <a href="http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html">http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html</a>.</p> <p>Have students use a graphic organizer to compare Canada's official multicultural policy (available at <a href="http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp">http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp</a>) with federal policies toward Nikkei in the 1940s.</p>
<p><i>Social Justice</i></p> <p>Why did the Canadian government want to deport Nikkei from a strong and prosperous Canada to a bombed-out defeated nation with millions of starving people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why were the Nikkei community forced to choose to live under strict regulations in Canada or move to Japan?</li> <li>• How did the 10,000 Nikkei facing deportation feel about having to leave Canada?</li> </ul>	<p>British Columbia</p> <p>Social Studies 11 (British Columbia Ministry of Education 2005)</p> <p>Autonomy and International Involvement:</p> <p>assess Canada's role in World War II and the war's impact on Canada—explain the war's impact on the home front ("enemy aliens") (p 33).</p>	<p>Watch the NFB film <i>Gateway to Asia</i> (10 minutes), which provides an overview of British Columbia in 1945. This background knowledge can help students when considering British Columbia following WWII and around the time of the government's deportation orders for roughly 10,000 Nikkei. Compare the film's portrayal of Aboriginal people and of persons of European, Indian, Chinese and Japanese ancestry in British Columbia.</p> <p>Next, watch the NFB film <i>Minoru: Memory of Exile</i> (20 minutes), which provides a first-hand account of the uprooting, internment, loss of Canadian citizenship, exile to Japan and eventual regaining of Canadian citizenship after joining the Canadian Armed Forces in Japan. This animated film provides a very different perspective of British Columbia and can be used to highlight the experiences of thousands of Japanese Canadians who lost their Canadian citizenship.</p> <p>Contrast these two films critically, using activities such as a T-chart to compare the experiences of Japanese Canadians with those from other cultural groups in British Columbia, or use a KWL activity to drive students' thinking through the unit.</p>

## Critical Literacy and Historical Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom

This is very disappointing. ... I think the long-term effect on every Canadian will be very bad ... If upheld it establishes an unfortunate precedent for the country ... In effect this nullifies the provisions for Canadian citizenship just laid down ... If this can be done to naturalized Japanese-Canadians, it can be done to any group in Canada. No one is secure in his citizenship.

—T C “Tommy” Douglas,  
*Toronto Daily Star* 1946

Few issues raise questions of citizenship as provocatively as the subjects of internment and deportation. Can governments uproot, dispossess and relocate groups of people today? Who protects individual human rights when the government is infringing upon them? What recourse do individuals have if their rights have been infringed upon? The deportation orders to send roughly 10,000 Nikkei from Canada to the ashes of postwar Japan raise all of these questions and more, with similarities to the persecution of members of diverse groups throughout our history. This subject is therefore also well suited to comparative studies of events such as the displacement of Aboriginal peoples, the expulsion of the Acadians from the Maritimes, the relocation of African Nova Scotians from Africville or even the Holocaust. The subject presents ample opportunities for students to engage in critical literacy and historical thinking, drawing upon historical texts to provide multiple perspectives on these events.

### **Critical Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom**

Table 1 above provides examples of how the subject of Nikkei internment and deportation could address select curricular outcomes through a critical literacy and historical thinking approach. The “big ideas” questions are inspired by Westcott and Viator’s (2008) article on using primary documents related to Japanese American internment in the classroom. They suggest an inquiry project that focuses on equality and social justice, aiming to answer the question “What does it mean to be a US citizen?” (p 202). They suggest that groups of students investigate the “big idea” questions, as well as their own questions, to

begin their research. They argue that “through the study of primary documents, students will progress beyond their cultural confines to an enhanced understanding of a tragic moment in our history” (p 202). Miksch and Ghre (2004) also discuss teaching ideas for Japanese American internment, “so that such policies will not be repeated” (p 224). They suggest active learning tasks including a newspaper research assignment, a perspective-taking writing assignment with discussion, a simulation of court proceedings and a debate for students to utilize their newly gained knowledge of citizenship and human rights. Assignments like these can help students understand that a confluence of factors, including institutional racism and wartime hysteria, led to the oppression of Nikkei in both the United States and Canada, where in many respects the process resembled a form of ethnic cleansing (Price 2011; Timmons 2011).

### **Historical Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom**

Marcus and Stoddard (2009) cite recent studies suggesting that teachers use video and film more frequently than most other forms of media in their classroom, and that as high as 82 per cent of history teachers use documentary film at least once a week. The suggestion of using the two films recommended in Table 1 comes with a caveat: simply passively viewing films does little more for developing critical literacy or historical thinking than do hearing lectures and reading textbooks. Introducing students to critical literacy and critical media literacy strategies encourages them to understand sources as “ideologically biased” (Robertson and Hughes 2011). Developing critical media literacy is crucial for students as multimedia and online technologies continue to grow and requires competencies additional to those required for reading traditional texts (Gee and Hayes 2011; Kane 2010; Kim and Kamil 2003; Lankshear and Knobel 2003). The Historical Thinking Project argues that in order for students to think historically, they must be able to “establish historical significance; use primary source evidence; identify continuity and change; analyze cause and consequence; take historical perspectives; understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations” (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness 2014). Viewing historical films as primary sources representing one perspective requires students to engage in “critical historical thinking so that they make connections to the periods in which the movies were made” (Walker 2006, 34), which can help students

develop nuanced understandings of historical events. Teachers can make room for multiple perspectives in their classrooms by incorporating both a “victim-centered perspective” and a “perpetrator-based perspective” that allows survivor testimonies (in this case, Nikkei voices) to play a central role (Blutinger 2012). There are resources available online that can allow students to meet curricular outcomes while better understanding the core curricular concepts of citizenship, human rights and social justice, some of which will be discussed below.<sup>2</sup>

## Core Curricular Concepts

### ***Core Concept—Citizenship***

What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen today? What rights and freedoms do Canadians have by virtue of their citizenship? Contrasting our citizenship rights today with those of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s can help illuminate how the extension of rights has evolved over time. In order for students to better understand the social, political and economic climate in which Nikkei experienced their uprooting, internment and deportation, two National Film Board of Canada (NFB) films may be viewed (see Table 1). These films can be used to frontload lessons, or a unit, with background knowledge to help students better understand life in British Columbia in the 1940s, prior to engaging in further study of the Nikkei experience in Canada. The first NFB film is *Gateway to Asia* (10 minutes), which examines British Columbia in 1945. This provides a background about British Columbia immediately following WWII and around the time of the government’s deportation orders for roughly 10,000 Nikkei. Viewing this film as a primary resource, and one of many possible perspectives, can help students critically examine which perspectives are included and excluded. In particular, students can compare the film’s portrayal of Aboriginal peoples and persons of European, South Asian, Japanese and Chinese ancestry in British Columbia. The second NFB film, *Minoru: Memory of Exile* (20 minutes), provides a first-hand account of one man’s uprooting, internment, loss of Canadian citizenship and exile to Japan, and eventual regaining of Canadian citizenship after joining the Canadian Armed Forces in Japan. This animated film provides a very different perspective of British Columbia and can be used to highlight the experiences of thousands of exiled Japanese Canadians who lost their Canadian citizenship. The

irony of regaining his Canadian citizenship by joining the army was not lost on Minoru Fukushima, who recalls his feelings in the film about later returning to Canada, “the only home [he] knew.”

A critical analysis of these films as primary sources allows students to better understand British Columbia and Canada during the 1940s and encourages students to question the meaning of citizenship. Students might use graphic organizers to compare how the various cultural groups are portrayed in *Gateway to Asia*, or use a KWL chart to indicate what they already know (K) about citizenship rights and what they want to know (W) about the Japanese Canadian experience prior to viewing the films, and what they have learned (L) about Canadian citizenship rights in the 1940s after viewing the films (Daniels, Zemelman and Steineke 2007).

Examining primary documents is an excellent way to encourage historical thinking, and since primary documents pertaining to the Japanese Canadian experience of the 1940s are accessible, students have the opportunity to engage critically with these sources. Two such documents available online (see Appendix B) are the official federal government notification to Nikkei males they would be sent to road construction labour camps and the official federal government notification to all remaining Nikkei that they would be sent to remote internment camps in the British Columbia interior (National Association of Japanese Canadians 2005). These primary documents are the documents that began the dismantling of the Nikkei community and eventually led to the exile of almost 4,000 to postwar occupied Japan. Students can complete primary source evaluations and historical thinking activities to critically analyze the primary documents and their impact on society, using templates developed by the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness for the Historical Thinking Project (the templates for all six elements of historical thinking are available at <http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concept-templates>). These templates are powerful tools to assist students in organizing their thoughts and building literacy and historical thinking capabilities.

### ***Core Concept—Human Rights***

Although the Nikkei experience of the 1940s occurred prior to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>4</sup> the events carried out by the Canadian government raise very serious questions over human rights then and now. Students could use such an inquiry to track the evolution of human rights over time.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these, along with other resources, can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, in Paris. *One World in Dialogue*, Volume 4, Number 1, 2017



Providing students the opportunity to search online archival material for this or any other activity introduces them to historical research. By supporting and guiding students to search online archives for information related to the Nikkei experience, teachers can build historical and critical literacy and foster historical thinking. Students can use searchable websites such as Library and Archives Canada, British Columbia Archives, and Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre Archives to find relevant photographs of the Nikkei community's uprooting between 1942 and 1949 to analyze whether the government infringed upon their human and citizenship rights. To develop historical literacy and thinking, students might choose and present one image to the class, discussing the photo's relevance, why they chose it, what was happening at the time, and how they located the source and source information. For example, a student may present something like the following:

This photo (see image below), taken in 1942 in British Columbia, is called: "Relocation of Japanese-Canadians to internment camps in the interior of British Columbia." I chose this photo because you can see the many unsmiling faces of adults and children on their way to isolated internment camps in the British Columbia interior. The adults are talking and one child seems to be looking at them trying to understand what is happening. To me this image shows how stressful their

uprooting and dispossession was. I find this image powerful in that these Nikkei do not seem to know where they are going, what the conditions will be like or how long they will be there. They do not seem to have a choice, and likely do not yet know that they will never return to their homes and property in British Columbia.

I found this image on the Library and Archives Canada website. I selected Search in the Archives portion of the website database, then under Type of Material, Photographic Material. I used the search terms Japanese Canadian Deportation, and Japanese Deportation, but found no matching images. I changed my search term to Japanese Canadian and found 32 images. Source information: Library and Archives Canada. "Relocation of Japanese-Canadians to internment camps in the interior of British Columbia (1942)," British Columbia, photographer unknown, accession number 1972-051 NPC. Reproduction copy number C-047397.

Teachers who use archives in the classroom must be prepared to provide guidance to ensure that all students can engage in the activity. Supporting students in their search and analysis provides an excellent opportunity to encourage critical literacy and historical thinking in the social studies classroom.



*Photo from Library and Archives Canada.*

## Core Concept—Social Justice

Online archives can help us understand the social injustice Japanese Canadians experienced. One digital archive available for use in the classroom is the CBC Digital Archives. This archive contains numerous video and audio clips pertaining to Japanese Canadians, which tell the story of the “largest mass exodus in Canadian history” (CBC Digital Archives nd). These clips can serve as primary documents, and provide students an opportunity to search through an archive for relevant historical documents from various perspectives. This digital archive also has a teacher resource page with suggestions, and tips for using the website in your classroom. One suggestion is to divide the class into groups, each viewing and sharing information from an archived CBC clip then, as a class, creating a timeline of Japanese Canadian history that can illustrate this social injustice. Compare the student-made timeline with the timeline designed to accompany the resource guide *Internment and Redress: The Japanese Canadian Experience* (Fukawa et al 2002). Students could also assume the role of a teenager in the 1940s and write letters to exiled Japanese Canadian teenagers in Japan, like the teen who wrote the caption in the beginning of this paper, indicating their comprehension of these events as injustices. Another searchable archive is that of the *New Canadian*, the English-language newspaper that served the Nikkei community in Canada during the 1940s. This newspaper represents the perspective of the Nikkei community and is an excellent source for students to learn how the Nikkei were affected by their internment and deportation.

As Wolk (2003) states, “Children’s literature, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and picture books, offers endless opportunities to teach for critical literacy” (p 104–5). The novel *Obasan*, by Joy Kogawa (1981), about the experiences of a young child during the uprooting and internment of the Nikkei community in Canada, remains an excellent piece of literature for use in the high school classroom and could easily be supplemented with historical inquiry.

## Conclusion

When teachers embed critical literacy and historical thinking into their lessons, students develop essential analytical and conceptual abilities that can help them far more than simply memorizing names,

dates and places. This paper has discussed just a few of many possibilities for using lessons about Japanese Canadian internment and deportation in developing critical literacy and historical thinking among social studies students. By using these approaches, teachers can engage students in active learning experiences on themes of social justice, human rights and citizenship. As Wolk (2003) explains, one goal of social studies courses should be to use critical literacy to connect with students’ lives by focusing on larger concepts rather than discrete facts. Such approaches can encourage students to think, talk and write about issues of race, class, gender and power in relation to historical events, and by so doing, “we are embedding critical literacy into their lives” (p 104).

With federal government funding through the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Historical Thinking Project seeks to provide schools, school boards, provincial ministries of education, publishers and public history organizations with “models of more meaningful history teaching, assessment, and learning for their students and audiences” (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness 2014). With this support, one can expect to see more historical thinking embedded in high school history courses. Using primary documents in the social studies classroom is one effective way to foster historical thinking and encourage critical literacy among students. An inquiry into the experiences of Japanese Canadians during and after the Second World War can provide rich opportunities for students to become more critically literate, more adept in historical thinking processes and, at the same time, better citizens.

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## APPENDIX A

### Selected Resources

#### Resource Guides

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## APPENDIX B



# TO MALE ENEMY ALIENS NOTICE

Under date of February 2nd, 1942, the Honourable the Minister of National Defence with the concurrence of the Minister of Justice gave public notice defining an area of British Columbia, as described below, to be a protected area after the 31st day of January, 1942; that is to say, that area of the Province of British Columbia, including all islands, west of a line described hereunder:-

Commencing at boundary point No. 7 on the International Boundary between the Dominion of Canada and Alaska, thence following the line of the "Cascade Mountains" as defined by paragraph 2 of Section 24 of the Interpretation Act of British Columbia, being Chapter 1 of the Revised Statutes of 1936, to the Northwest corner of Lot 13-10, Range 5, Coast Land Districts, thence due East to a point due North of the Northwest corner of Lot 373, Range 5, Coast Land District, thence due South to said Northwest corner of Lot 373 being a point on the aforementioned line of the "Cascade Mountains", (being the area surrounding the village municipality of Terrace); thence following said line of the "Cascade Mountains" to the Western Boundary of Township 5, Range 26, West of the 6th Meridian, thence following the Northerly, Easterly and Southerly Boundaries of said Township 5, to the Southwest corner thereof, being a point on the line of the "Cascade Mountains" (being the area surrounding the village municipality of Hope); thence following the "Cascade Mountains" to the Southerly boundary of the Province.

Pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 4 of the Defence of Canada Regulations, the Minister of Justice has, on the 5th day of February, 1942, ordered that:-

1. All male Enemy Aliens of the ages of 18 years to 45 years, inclusive, shall leave the protected area hereinbefore referred to on or before the 1st day of April, 1942;
2. That, subject to the provisions of paragraph No. 1 of this Order, no Enemy Alien shall, after the date of this order, enter, leave or return to such protected area except with the permission of the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force, or an Officer of that Force designated by the Commissioner to act for him in this respect;
3. That no Enemy Alien shall have in his possession or use, while in such protected area, any camera, radio transmitter, radio short-wave receiving set, firearm, ammunition, or explosive.

OTTAWA, February 7, 1942.

S.T. WOOD (Commissioner)  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

TO BE POSTED IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE



# NOTICE

## TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN

Having reference to the Protected Area of British Columbia as described in an Extra of the Canada Gazette, No. 174 dated Ottawa, Monday, February 2, 1942:-

1. EVERY PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE, WHILE WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREA AFORESAID, SHALL HEREAFTER BE AT HIS USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE EACH DAY BEFORE SUNSET AND SHALL REMAIN THEREIN UNTIL SUNRISE ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, AND NO SUCH PERSON SHALL GO OUT OF HIS USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE AFORESAID UPON THE STREETS OR OTHERWISE DURING THE HOURS BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE;

2. NO PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE SHALL HAVE IN HIS POSSESSION OR USE IN SUCH PROTECTED AREA ANY MOTOR VEHICLE, CAMERA, RADIO TRANSMITTER, RADIO RECEIVING SET, FIREARM, AMMUNITION OR EXPLOSIVE;

3. IT SHALL BE THE DUTY OF EVERY PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE HAVING IN HIS POSSESSION OR UPON HIS PREMISES ANY ARTICLE MENTIONED IN THE NEXT PRECEDING PARAGRAPH, FORTHWITH TO CAUSE SUCH ARTICLE TO BE DELIVERED UP TO ANY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE RESIDING IN OR NEAR THE LOCALITY WHERE ANY SUCH ARTICLE IS HAD IN POSSESSION, OR TO AN OFFICER OR CONSTABLE OF THE POLICE FORCE OF THE PROVINCE OR CITY IN OR NEAR SUCH LOCALITY OR TO AN OFFICER OR CONSTABLE OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

4. ANY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OR OFFICER OR CONSTABLE RECEIVING ANY ARTICLE MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS ORDER SHALL GIVE TO THE PERSON DELIVERING THE SAME A RECEIPT THEREFOR AND SHALL REPORT THE FACT TO THE COMMISSIONER OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE, AND SHALL RETAIN OR OTHERWISE DISPOSE OF ANY SUCH ARTICLE AS DIRECTED BY THE SAID COMMISSIONER.

5. ANY PEACE OFFICER OR ANY OFFICER OR CONSTABLE OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HAVING POWER TO ACT AS SUCH PEACE OFFICER OR OFFICER OR CONSTABLE IN THE SAID PROTECTED AREA, IS AUTHORIZED TO SEARCH WITHOUT WARRANT THE PREMISES OR ANY PLACE OCCUPIED OR BELIEVED TO BE OCCUPIED BY ANY PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE REASONABLY SUSPECTED OF HAVING IN HIS POSSESSION OR UPON HIS PREMISES ANY ARTICLE MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS ORDER, AND TO SEIZE ANY SUCH ARTICLE FOUND ON SUCH PREMISES;

6. EVERY PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE SHALL LEAVE THE PROTECTED AREA AFORESAID FORTHWITH;

7. NO PERSON OF THE JAPANESE RACE SHALL ENTER SUCH PROTECTED AREA EXCEPT UNDER PERMIT ISSUED BY THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE;

8. IN THIS ORDER, "PERSONS OF THE JAPANESE RACE" MEANS, AS WELL AS ANY PERSON WHOLLY OF THE JAPANESE RACE, A PERSON NOT WHOLLY OF THE JAPANESE RACE IF HIS FATHER OR MOTHER IS OF THE JAPANESE RACE AND IF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE BY NOTICE IN WRITING HAS REQUIRED OR REQUIRES HIM TO REGISTER PURSUANT TO ORDER-IN-COUNCIL P.C. 9760 OF DECEMBER 16th, 1941.

DATED AT OTTAWA THIS 26th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1942.

*Louis S. St. Laurent,*  
*Minister of Justice*

To be posted in a Conspicuous Place

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# Reconciliation Quilt Project

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*Suzanne Williamson*

In keeping with the theme of considering different perspectives and social justice, Lacombe teacher Suzanne Williamson's Grade 9 classes studied Aboriginal rights, Indian residential schools and the legacy of those schools. Students discovered that at one time, 80 of these schools were in operation, and approximately 150,000 Aboriginal children attended them. The students explored the legacy left by these schools, which still affects Aboriginal people and Canadian society today. The fact that many survivors have lost their ancestral language and traditional cultures, and the emotional, physical and sexual abuse that some survivors experienced were just some of the effects students looked at. Students considered the healing process that would be necessary, one that would take time and understanding in addition to the need for Canadians to hear the survivors' stories and acknowledge their experiences.

Near the completion of the unit, the students each chose an image and hand appliqued those images onto quilt squares. The images related to themes such as love, hope, peace, unity, friendship, strength and courage. Ms Williamson's mother, Sharon Williamson (a local quilter), pieced and quilted the squares into two quilts. For the students, these quilts were a physical demonstration of the learning that took place in the classroom regarding the residential schools, their legacy and Aboriginal rights in Canada. These "Reconciliation Quilts" were a way

for the 55 students to share their dedication to promoting understanding and empathy towards Canada's first peoples. One quilt is hung in École Lacombe Junior High School as a reminder of the importance of compassion and empathy towards all cultures. The second quilt was presented as a gift to Ermineskin Junior/Senior High School in Maskwacis, the site of the residential school closest to ELJHS, as a way to forever provide a link between the two schools and the two communities.

The Grade 9 students from ELJHS travelled to Maskwacis on Monday, February 22, 2016, to present the quilt as a gift to the school. School Elder Marvin Littlechild talked with the students about his experiences in the Indian residential schools, including 12 years at the one in Ermineskin. At a school assembly, there was a drumming and dancing presentation. The drumming group consisted of two adults and a number of male students from the school. The dancers, who came into the gym in a Grand Entry, were a women's traditional dancer, three jingle dancers, a women's fancy dancer, a grass dancer, a chicken dancer and a bustle dancer. The dancers asked a number of the Lacombe students to join them in an Intertribal Dance prior to the formal presentation of the quilt. Once the presentation was done, a Friendship Dance (or Round Dance) was done with all of the students and staff in the gym. The day concluded with a tour of the school.





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# Introducing the Members of the *One World in Dialogue* Review Board

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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 in 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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