

**FROM THEN TO NOW...
TO THE MILLENIUM AND
BEYOND...**

Conference Proceedings:

The June History Experience

**A Summary Report of the
June 28th and 29th 1999
Social Studies Conference
Held at the Faculty of Education
of
McGill University**

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I. Introduction

The History Task Force (HTF) came into existence in the Fall of 1997 and was modeled on the already successful committees that had previously been established in the fields of mathematics, the sciences, and technology. Operating under the aegis of the Direction des politiques et des projets of the Services à la communauté anglophone, the HTF is composed of a wide range of representatives from the anglophone educational community. In broad terms, the mandate of the History Task Force may be summarized as:

The establishment of the History Task Force was prompted by the need to implement the revised social science curricula within the professional context as described in Quebec Schools on Course. The mandate of the HTF is to encourage, advise, and aid in the teaching and learning of social science at the elementary and secondary public and private schools of the anglophone educational community within the province of Quebec.

Since its inception, the HTF has initiated and carried out a number of varied projects and it is professionally consistent within its inclusive mandate to report specific events to its wider clientele.

One of the first concrete acts of the History Task Force was to design, carry out, and analyze a province-wide survey of elementary social studies and secondary history teachers and administrators. Released in the Fall of 1998, this *Overview of the Teaching of Elementary Social Studies and Secondary History Within the Anglophone Community of the Province of Quebec* acted in twin and interlocking capacities of a needs assessment and a blue print. It is clear that this survey struck a nerve as manifested by the high return rate and, furthermore, by the wide interest generated by the *Report's* subsequent dissemination throughout the anglophone educational community.

In many ways, the teachers and administrators of the anglophone public and private school systems overwhelmingly indicated that a need was felt in regards to the teaching and learning of elementary social studies and secondary history. Additionally, and most importantly, the many respondents highlighted the need for professionals to come together to share best practices and to engage and interact with the newly emerging curricula. From these survey results, the notion of a June Conference took root and this inaugural effort came to fruition on June 28 and 29, 1999 at the Faculty of Education of McGill University.

The two compulsory sessions (one dealing with the QESN network and the other with the evolving social studies program) as well as the 26 individual workshops (in English and/or in French) offered the participant a unique professional blend of choice and necessity. Furthermore, by utilizing a concurrent block format, a variety of workshops were simultaneously scheduled, thereby keeping participant numbers to a very manageable level for each individual animator.

As part of its overriding professional mandate and in an effort to keep all factions of the widely dispersed anglophone community apprised of all developments, the HTF has embarked upon an extensive program of public documentation. In line with this educational responsibility, these *Conference Proceedings* have been developed. As well as properly acknowledging the efforts of many concerned educators and organizations, these *Proceedings* will begin the process of forming a permanent record documenting how these history curriculum changes were introduced into the anglophone community.

These *Proceedings* may be roughly divided into two parts. The first section presents summaries of all of the compulsory and individual workshops that were offered during this two-day conference. The various summary reports were prepared, in the first instance, by teacher-candidates from the Faculty of Education of McGill University. In order to maintain a common framework while allowing for individual expression, the Editors have exercised as little literary control as possible. These individual, paired, and group accounts provide the reader with a flavour of this event and it is in such narrative accounts that one can see the passion and creativity that is abundant within the anglophone teaching community.

The second section of these *Proceedings* contains the more mundane but equally important material related to participant reaction. While not necessarily having the impact of the first section, these several reports are indicative of how well the conference was received by the participants, show that the initial efforts of the HTF were well placed, and indicate that additional financial and personnel resources will have to be allocated to future endeavours in order to continue to meet the professional needs as expressed by anglophone teachers.

As an aside, it is important to note that this inaugural conference looked mainly at the teaching and learning of history at the elementary levels. Therefore, the emphasis on the newly emerging elementary programs was dictated by the program development schedule and the Calendar of Implementation. Clearly, in future years, this conference will expand to include all of the emerging areas of the curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels.

The efforts of the Conference Planning Committee of the History Task Force must be formally acknowledged. These individuals gave generously of their time over many months in order to bring this initial effort to a satisfactory conclusion, and it is important that they be publicly noted for their endeavours. In alphabetical order, the Planning Committee consisted of:

Jon G. Bradley	Leonard Harney
Michael Gallagher	Arty Maravei
Allan Patenaude	

II. Session Summaries

Special Dedication

While many individuals and several organizations gave generously of their time and energy to make this inaugural effort so successful, the editors feel that a special note of thanks must be expressed to the fourteen very special student-teachers who acted as hosts for this conference.

At a time when many students can justifiably be relaxing or dealing with a part-time job, these individuals cheerfully and willingly came back to a building that they are all too familiar with in order to attend sessions and write reports. Further, they helped in many unseen ways in regards to shepherding presenters to their rooms, securing audio-visual equipment, and even making alternate room arrangements to compensate for a double booking problem.

Several of these teacher candidates have recently completed their four year Bachelor of Education degree programs and look forward to attending next year's conference as paid participants. Others have already asked if they can volunteer again as they found the sessions so powerful and the ambiance so rewarding.

The editors feel that the energy and the drive exhibited by these beginning teachers bodes well for the anglophone community, and respectfully dedicates these Conference Proceedings to these new teachers for new programs in the new millennium!

Reader Note:

The following summaries are presented in the order in which they appeared in the conference calendar. As a matter of logistics as well as appearance, most of the workshop reports - except for a few - have been restricted to a single page.

Compulsory Session:
Geography, History and Citizenship Education
Animators: France Gagné, Claire Iasenza, and Anna Rizzuto

reviewed by Soraya Badih, Linda Geiring & Karen Gordon

This new elementary program will be called “Geography, History and Citizenship Education”. During the 1999-2000 school year, the program development teams will continue to develop further the preliminary version presented at this conference. It is anticipated that an extensive field testing of the program will be commenced with the September 2000 school year. The evolving program will be open to adjustment for another year as more and more classes and schools become involved with the teaching of this developing curriculum. All stakeholders, from the History Task Force to the individual teacher representatives, will carefully scrutinize each report so the new program evolves in as a professional and an all encompassing manner as possible.

Essential to its development, this program takes an integrated approach to the teaching of geography, history and citizenship education, and acknowledges the many ways that other subjects can aid in achieving common program goals. Based to a large extent on what might be termed “the spiral curriculum”, the basic competencies are revisited again and again over time and in different grade levels by pupils in increasing dimensions of complexity. This means, for example, that a particular competency introduced in grade three will be investigated again by pupils in grades four, five, and six. Additionally, it is possible that certain concepts will be investigated more than once in different ways within a single grade and that certain concepts may also be dealt with via other subject areas. Continually evolving, spiraling, and interconnecting throughout the four years (grades 3 to 6) of the program are four (4) major curricular themes; namely,

- (1) interpretation of various contemporary and historical social phenomena located in different times and locations,
- (2) understanding world events especially as those world events impact upon Quebec, Canada, and North America,
- (3) development of historical and geographical awareness so that events may be placed into appropriate time and physical frames of reference, and
- (4) beginning the process of understanding the democratic process and the rights and obligations associated with citizenship.

Notwithstanding the early stages of development, a number of concerns were noted by the participants. Briefly summarized below are some of the issues raised by the teachers. It is

important to recognize that the resolution of many of these issues will occur during the field testing.

- Unfortunately, greater instructional details were simply not available at this time. As frustrating as that may be to some classroom practitioners, it is too early in the design process for specific topic details to be available. However, via the QESN web site and through the other communications links of the History Task Force, elementary teachers will be kept apprised of all significant developments.
- Some reservations were raised in regards to what may be termed “final objectives”. The wording seemed somewhat ambiguous in some cases and open to wide interpretation. Notwithstanding the best of intentions, the political reality is that this program is being developed in French and then translated as quickly as possible for the anglophone community. Working documents do not have the polish of final drafts and it is indeed sometimes necessary to work with an awkward commentary.
- Emanating from the previous concern was the general issue of “assessment”. Specifically, teachers wanted to know more in the way of how each of the four general competencies would be evaluated, and more specifically, how the various sub-units of each would be assessed. Also, several teachers commented that spiral programs demanded that those teachers at the lower levels had to teach the various concepts and objectives or students would be at a distinct disadvantage as they moved on through the grade levels.
- A number of teachers commented on the apparent lack of local or individual input into the new program. How will specific regions be able to augment the basic program with their own particular geographical sites and/or historical events/personalities? While it was noted that 25% of the new program was to be locally developed, it was clear that teachers wanted more information on how to incorporate this component.
- As can be anticipated, teachers wanted to know what student material (textbooks, workbooks, CD-ROM’s, videos, etc.) would be available and when. If there was one universal concern noted by the participants, it would be the one dealing with appropriate student material - either in English for native speakers or in French for immersion classes.

A clear message was given! Anglophone teachers are an integral component of this design process. This is not a curriculum which is being prepared in secret and then will be sprung upon unsuspecting classroom practitioners. Rather, this is a detailed and involved professional journey in which it is possible for many voices to be heard. The process will not be easy and will not be without bumps and detours. Not every point of view will be accommodated. However, anglophone teachers are part of this design adventure, will be active participants during the various trail phases, and are being provided with the most up-to-date information as soon as possible.

Compulsory Session
Resources for social studies teachers on the Québec English Schools Network
Animators: Christiane Dufour and Deborah Gross

reviewed by Isabelle Lavoie, Bounmy Thammavong & Carmen Yu

The *Quebec English Schools Network* (QESN) is a web site that was created by and for teachers. Initially developed by seven small and isolated schools who sought to share information via electronic mail, the site has grown such that any teacher in Quebec (or the world for that matter) who has access to a computer with Internet capabilities is able to find a community of scholars at his/her fingertips. Currently, the QESN site is funded and administered by the Service à la communauté anglophone and its sole purpose is to bring topical and relevant information to professionals throughout the anglophone educational community.

Before getting down to the details of what the QESN site is, it is important to clearly state what it is not. This web site is not a place where teachers can go and download generic lesson plans. Additionally, the site is not a place where students can go to find quick and easy answers to their exam questions. Far more interactive and sophisticated than an electronic “ditto master service”, the QESN’s multi-purposes engage the practitioner (and soon the student) in a wide ranging professional manner.

When first signing on to the web site, a colourful home page provides an intriguing directory of possible avenues. The “Welcome” and “About the QESN” provide the first time visitor with easy guidelines. These two sites provide some general background information about the QESN and offer a *raison d’être* so that unfamiliarity soon leads to comfort. The “What’s New” feature permits all visitors to quickly see what is current and directs them to new developments in a timely manner. Also arrayed on this matrix are a number of other electronic contacts that instantly transport the viewer. These additional resources may be summarized as:

- The *Project Center* focuses on three main areas; namely,
 - (1) telecollaborative projects,
 - (2) using the internet in the classroom, and
 - (3) designing pedagogical home pages.

All three of these foci help teachers and their students use telecommunications in a way that puts them - the user - in touch with information, peers, and experts within meaningful pedagogical contexts.

- The *Contacts* button allows teachers to add their names to a variety of “List Serves” which are electronic professional newsletters. Once added to a particular List Serve, the teacher will receive information about that particular endeavour. This information can be useful in program development as well as professional improvement. Additionally, there is a *yellow pages* feature which permits teachers to seek out professional partners/schools for joint/collaborative projects. Furthermore, via this box, teachers can receive information from the anglophone services group of the MEQ.
- The *Subject Resources* feature on the web site is extremely valuable. Although mostly geared to the secondary school levels at the moment, plans are well underway to increase the elementary focus such that this component provides practical program information to practitioners. Presently, the *History* element of this box contains material related to the Quebec secondary history programs as well as information and documents related to the teaching of History. The excellent teaching unit “Some Missing Pages” is contained on this site as are outside links to other history web sites. Clearly, over the next few months, *Subject Resources* will grow in importance for elementary teachers and will begin to reflect the input from classroom teachers.
- *Connections* is a special place within the QESN where teachers can meet to make decisions about how they would like to use technology and where they may plan activities of exercises based on the creative use of this technology. Additionally, teachers can reflect on how technology has impact on their classroom and how they might refine their teaching and learning strategies to make optimum use of the emerging technologies. Furthermore, this site is a place where teachers can share with other like-minded professionals so that all may grow via this pedagogical exchange.

The QESN web site is not simply a high technological tool that is available only to a select few individuals. This service is available to all anglophone teachers and the overall mission of the QESN is to provide information and communication within a collegial framework. A strength of the current web site is that it does not simply consist of abstract or detached information but provides pertinent and targeted information that is directly relevant to Quebec educators. Additionally, the whole notion of a professional community is strengthened via the various chat lines and list serves that are available. This is not a static and remote information resource; rather, the QESN is a vibrant and evolving community of scholars whose overall goal is to provide an improved learning environment for student and practitioner.

Happy surfing at: www.QESN.meq.gouv.qc.ca

Citizenship Education - What is it Anyway?

Animator: Jackie Kirk

reviewed by: Michele Wright

“For, stripped of the temporary associations which give rise to it, it is now the moment when by common consent we pause to become conscious of our national life and to rejoice in it, to recall what our country has done for each of us, and to ask ourselves what we can do for our country in return.”

(Oliver Wendell Homes, Jr., *Address Before John Sedwick Post No. 4, Grand Army of the Republic*, May 30, 1884)

An international teacher, teacher trainer, and doctoral candidate, Jackie Kirk is interested in both theoretical and practical answers to the question: “Citizenship education - what is it anyway?” She began her session by asking participants what they thought the terms “citizenship” and “citizenship education” meant. Answers included: “knowing the laws of the land”, “taking responsibilities for your actions”, and “being a full participant in the global community”. As these answers and the workshop title implies, citizenship education is an amorphous and, some would say, a politically charged mission.

Before dealing with the detail of possible classroom/school scenarios, Ms. Kirk outlined some key elements inherent to citizenship education. These included:

- fundamental concepts; such as, human rights, democracy, diversity, equality and pluralism in society
- knowledge of certain elements of public life including the parliamentary processes
- development of values and attitudes; such as, tolerance and acceptance as well as a genuine desire for learning

As many educators have pointed out, good citizenship education is already a reality in many classrooms. Ms. Kirk shared some contemporary examples of activities and practices such as:

- real and virtual school/student twinning projects
- tree planting/community environmental projects
- peer mediation and voluntary service programs

The session concluded with a brief discussion of the issues and implications surrounding citizenship education. Is this a strategy to better prepare our students for the real world, or yet another imposed trend which threatens to overload and further fragment the existing system?

This presentation was a welcome opportunity for teachers to grapple with some of the fundamental underpinnings of the nature and implications of citizenship education. Additionally, all participants were exposed to a wealth of practical ideas and creative suggestions within a collegial framework.

Using a Computer for the Teaching of History
Animator: Michael Gallagher

reviewed by: Susan Esslemont

“The computer is no better than its program.”
(E. E. Morison, *Men, Machines and Modern Times*, 1966)

Acknowledging that some recent research has supported the notion that pupils tend to be early visual learners, Mike Gallagher (a classroom teacher from Sinclair Laird Elementary School) argued that the computer, in a similar but more complex manner - like television and video games - can become a powerful individual learning instrument. According to Gallagher, the computer and its attendant programs can aid the individual classroom teacher in the teaching and learning of the social studies. Additionally, according to research findings mentioned during the workshop, the heightened student interest and motivation generated by computer use often carries over into other realms of the curriculum.

Notwithstanding the potential power of computer use, it is essential that pupils be taught how to interact with the various components so that they are not intimidated by the medium but realize that they are actually in control of the material. Keyboarding skills and levels of critical thinking are but two developing skills that teachers have to continually reinforce with the students. While sophisticated new social studies software programs are available that are based on complex and detailed scenarios, pupils often need the continuing and reassuring hand and voice of the classroom practitioner.

According to Gallagher, the individual classroom computer has three main strengths; namely,
1- computer workstations are tools for the teachers themselves as places to search for information, chat with other professionals, check out curriculum relevant web sites, prepare lesson notes and plans, review new software programs, and to generally “play” with this evolving medium.

2- in a similar manner, computers are also learning stations for the pupils themselves. As well as dealing with particular software programs, students can chat with other students in distant schools, review material from interesting web sites, and prepare their own notes and written materials for projects, reports, and debates.

3- via internet facilities, the classroom computer becomes a “window to the world” and allows both teacher and student an opportunity to interact with other teachers and other students from any where on the planet.

The world of computers is rapidly changing: equipment costs are drastically dropping, cheaper, more complex, and interactive social studies software programs are becoming readily available, and on-line communication is becoming cheaper, faster, and easier. Our contemporary elementary pupils will experience an explosion in data and information, and it is incumbent upon teachers today to teach the critical skills so that the computer and its assistants become the servant and not the master.

These Rights Are Our Rights
Animators: Louis Brousseau and Mark G. Peacock

reviewed by: Holly Cesari

“Right as a trivet.”
(Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*, chapter 50)

The presenters were quite forceful in pointing out that a society such as ours operates on two interrelated and intertwined underlying principles. These two principles may be characterized as rights and obligations. Too often, citizens appear to be overly concerned with perceived injustices to their rights while negating and denying any responsibility for the corresponding and asymmetrical obligations. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult for elementary pupils to understand that rights and obligations are the flip sides of the same coin. Finally, too many of our students are influenced by what they see on TV and/or the movies and mistakenly surmise that what transpires south of the border exists here.

Historically, Canada’s constitution consisted of the 1867 British North America Act and whatever legal traditions were recognized by the various levels of court jurisdiction. In the final analysis, the most weighty of legal matters had to be referred back to the House of Lords in London, England. By the by, it was this very body that declared in 1921 that Canadian females were “persons in law” and so could be elected to public offices such as the House of Commons in Ottawa. Clearly, a modern and sophisticated Canada could not allow itself to be hobbled by such an archaic and cumbersome system and so, in 1984, the Canadian Constitution came into force. Essentially, this new Constitution maintained the provisions of the British North America Act while adding a new key element called the “Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms”.

Notwithstanding a Federal Constitution, it is important to note that each of the provinces has also enacted various kinds of “Charters” in an attempt to formally protect its citizens but, also, to lay bare the obligations that come with citizenship in a country. In a modern democratic society which interacts with the world but nestles next door to the most powerful nation on earth, it is essential that our elementary pupils are exposed to our own unique legal framework within our own historical and contemporary contexts.

As the new elementary Geography, History and Citizenship Education program evolves over the next few years, it will become incumbent upon classroom practitioners to expose their students to all aspects of the Canadian and Provincial documents. Concepts such as citizenship, democratic, etc. are not easily understood in isolation and so it will be necessary for elementary teachers to deal with these ethereal but central notions at the intellectual, emotional, and attitudinal levels of the students.

For full legal texts, explanations, problems, and activities, check out the QESN web site:
www.QESN.meq.gouv.qc.ca/history

Some Missing Pages
Animators: Marion Lowe-McLean and Junia Wilson

reviewed by: Holly Cesari

*“O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?”*

(Frances Cornford, *To A Fat Lady Seen From The Train*, 1915)

Designed to begin a gradual process of expanding the historical source data available to Quebec teachers and students, *Some Missing Pages* chronicles the historical impact and the contributions that Blacks have made in the development of Quebec and Canada. Subtitled *The Black Community in the History of Quebec and Canada*, this integrated teaching package not only presents material that will be of interest to educators and students, but it also models a curriculum approach that can be readily applied to other areas of our historical past.

The main title of this learning unit was inspired by the work of Esmeralda Thornhill who instituted the first Canadian university accredited course on Black women’s studies. Entitled *Black Women: The Missing Pages from Canadian Women’s Studies*, this course was taught in the early 1980’s at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University. Through this course and other pioneering endeavours by various concerned individuals and groups, especially the Provincial Association of Social Studies Teachers and the Quebec Board of Black Educators , *Some Missing Pages* was developed by the Service à la communauté anglophone of the MEQ.

While specifically designed to be directly compatible with the History of Quebec and Canada (History 414) secondary course of study, this unit provides excellent background material to educators, in general, and can be readily used by groups of upper elementary students desiring a more challenging element to their social studies program.

Some Missing Pages is divided into eight modules or units that carry the student from the earliest explorations of the “new world” by Europeans up to and including the contemporary world. While acknowledging that its focus is to present the role and contributions of Blacks to the development of Quebec and Canada, issues and concerns are placed within an historical context. For example, the chapter called “Black Immigration to Canada and Black Contributions to the Building of the Canadian Nation” sketches out the trials and tribulations experienced by Black farmers, tradespeople, and workers as they attempted to carve out a new future within the expanding Canada between Confederation and the commencement of the First World War.

While no longer available in print form, the entire *Some Missing Pages* curriculum unit is available on the QESN web site. This is an exciting document that introduces educators and pupils to a facet of our History that has too often in the past been ignored.

Some Missing Pages can be found at: www.QESN.meq.gouv.qc.ca/history

Real-Life Social Studies: Teaching With the Daily Newspaper

Animator: Lucy Loiselle

reviewed by: Bounmy Thammavong

“The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous - licentious - abominable - infernal - Not that I ever read them - no - I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.”

(Richard B. Sheridan, *The Critic*, I, i)

The Montreal *Gazette*, through its “Gazette-in-Education” division, has created a host of units, materials, tours, and activities that are suitable for elementary as well as secondary students. Designed to be representative of real-life scenarios, the *Gazette’s* assorted educational projects target various ability and language ranges. Briefly summarized below are some of the activities specifically aimed at elementary teachers and students:

A large number of guides are available. Due to the evolving nature of the contemporary world as well as constant revision, these guides are often up-dated and modified. Designed to be as user-friendly as possible, tasks can be undertaken by individuals as well as small groups of students. Here are some examples:

- ❑ *A News Beginning* [grades K - 3] contains 120 activity cards and is specifically targeted at the lower elementary level. Covering the whole curriculum range, many of the activities are language based and involve skills such as matching, finding, categorizing,...
- ❑ *It’s NIE for K - 3* develops language arts and social studies skills in young pupils.
- ❑ *City Streets, Rural Routes* [grades 1 - 6] uses the daily newspaper to develop a sense of community awareness.
- ❑ *Back to School* [grades K - 4] uses a holiday celebration format to introduce contemporary and historical concepts to children. As well as Christmas and Easter, this unit has material on Remembrance Day.
- ❑ *Weather Watch* [grades 1 - 6] is an interactive collection of almost 150 activity cards that deal with all aspects of the weather and the climate.

During the school year, the *Gazette* offers a number of specialty pages as part of the regular newspaper run. These particular pages are: (1) Mini Page, (2) Flash!, (3) What’s Up, and (4) Xpress. While all of these pages provide excellent teacher background, the Monday “Mini Page” and the Tuesday “Flash!” are probably the most appropriate for elementary-aged students. These eclectic pages contain puzzles, activities, pictures, current news items, as well as teacher suggestions.

Also during the school year, the paper offers a number of professional workshops for teachers and organizes classroom guided tours of the physical facilities. There is also a current events competition (The Gazette Challenge), a student newspaper competition, and a concert program. The daily newspaper is an inexpensive tool for classroom use. Providing readable and topical articles that appeal to just about every taste, interest, and ability level, further intriguing details can be found at: www.montrealgazette.com/NIE

History of Canada Through Student Eyes *Animator: Johanne Ethier*

reviewed by: Susan Esslemont

*Imagine yourself meeting one of Canada's original First Nations peoples and listening to their stories concerning creation?
What must it have been like to live with these original inhabitants? What did they eat, how did they dress, who/what did they worship?*

So many questions to ponder...so much history to consider! With this overall caveat in mind, Ms. Ethier, an elementary French immersion teacher with the Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, guided the participants so that they might appreciate how elementary pupils would come to grips with some of these fundamental questions.

Using the music of R. Carlos Nakai (*Flute des premiers nation*) as background and mental imaging techniques, participants were taken on an imaginary voyage to visit the First Peoples of Canada. Such intimate and personal voyages help pupils to imagine events, people, and places for themselves in a safe and secure manner. Furthermore, such exercises aid pupils in conjuring up and utilizing their own personal and practical knowledge.

This workshop introduced teachers to a challenging year-long classroom adventure for elementary pupils to learn about some aspects of the First Nations peoples. Working alone as well as collaboratively, students would develop life-long research skills and would learn in some depth about particular individuals. This entire project would culminate in a public "History Fair" extravaganza. Broadly speaking, there were three stages to this activity: (1) selection of an historical figure for research, (2) creation of a detailed textual and visual historical time line, and (3) creation of a "History Book".

Throughout this lengthy educational process, students would be engaged in collaborative and individual various tasks; such as:

- choosing an animal as their spiritual guide in a similar manner to the First Nations peoples,
- learning and refining various research tools so as to discriminate between fact and fiction, myth and reality,
- researching historical figures in order to create a biography, creating and using historical time lines, and preparing for an oral History Fair presentation.

Geared for pupils in the upper elementary grade levels, this history based project relied on integration from many other subjects. The disciplines of language arts, art, and music, for example, became practical partners in this project. As a follow-up discussion, plans are being investigated to see if all or part of Ms. Ethier's students' work can be placed on the QESN web site so that both her professional framework as well as student creativity may be modeled by other Quebec practitioners.

The Great Canadian Adventure and a Bird's-eye View of Quebec
Animator: Claire Iasenza

reviewed by: Lynn Murphy

*“Setting out on the voyage to Ithaca
you must pray that the way be long,
full of adventures and experiences.”*
(Constantine Peter Cavafy, *Ithaca*, I, 11)

This workshop enabled the participants to explore the use of games as an intriguing tool in the teaching of elementary social studies; especially for students enrolled in French immersion programs. Ms. Claire Iasenza, from the Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, designed her first game - *The Great Canadian Adventure* - after noticing her upper elementary students' general lack of interest in the various social studies themes.

According to Professor D. Stolovitch of the University of Montreal, the characteristic features of any game may be noted as (1) creativity, (2) conflict, (3) control, and (4) closure. Furthermore, Professor Stolovitch distinguishes two types of simulations; namely, (a) five to ten minute micro-games and (b) forty-five minute macro-games.

Ms. Iasenza's educational macro-games are designed to help students learn about the social aspects of the world in general and Canada/Quebec in particular. *The Great Canadian Adventure*, for example, is designed for grade six students and deals with issues that are distinctly Canadian. Included in this rubric are concerns related to citizenship education, the growth of the country, and issues related to our southern neighbours. *A Bird's-Eye View of Quebec*, on the other hand, more specifically deals with the geography, history and economic development of the province of Quebec.

In order to accommodate the varying academic ability levels within any group of children, the many questions and activities are designed to appeal to a wide range of interests, abilities, and backgrounds. An added benefit of the use of such gaming strategies within the on-going everyday structure of the elementary classroom is that such activities tend to promote cooperation amongst the pupils. Furthermore, the games are structured such that each and every child has an opportunity to enjoy the process at the same time as dealing with necessary material at their cognitive level.

Acknowledging that educational games are not the only or necessarily even the best way to deal with the social studies, Ms. Iasenza sees such techniques as additional pedagogical tools that can be easily used within the classroom structure to promote independent learning in a structured, controlled, and safe context.

For more information, contact Ms. Claire Iasenza at: cliasenza@hotmail.com

Managing Social Studies
Animator: Louise Stockwell

reviewed by: Lynn Murphy

“I am still looking to find interesting low vocabulary and high interest biographies and stories of famous Quebecers and Canadians to integrate in French programme.”

(Anonymous teacher comment, *Overview of the Teaching of Elementary Social Studies...*, 1998, page 24)

Ms. Stockwell, a classroom teacher with the Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, lead a very practical and hands-on session around the general concern of teaching elementary social studies within a French as a second language context. As is well documented from many research findings and is aptly demonstrated by the practical experiences of second language classroom practitioners, the learning of key academic concepts; such as those encapsulated in the social studies program, in a second language format can provide interesting intellectual, assessment, and linguistic difficulties for both the student and the teacher.

Based on her own practical experiences, Ms. Stockwell feels that those teachers who are dealing with the social studies areas in French have a double burden to carry. Not only must these teachers expose their pupils to the required content of the social studies program, but they must do so in a language that many of the students may not be comfortable with and/or be lacking basic linguistic skills. Therefore, Ms. Stockwell feels that it is very important for youngsters to be motivated and to view learning social studies in another language as a fun and exciting experience.

To some extent, she feels that classroom teachers have to “sell” the notion of learning an academic content subject in a second language situation. To this end and bearing in mind the pupils’ general difficulty with the second language, it is essential that visual aids, simulations, hands-on activities, mini-field trips, and games be heavily utilized in the classroom so that the academic content may be introduced in a manner that is less dependent upon direct instructional “teacher talk”.

As a way to illustrate the need to use other resources, Ms. Stockwell described how the themes of cartography and geography can be dealt with via local area walks and short visits to interesting locations. A number of the workshop participants shared their practical experiences and commented that their pupils had benefited from such immediate hands-on activities as classroom map making and community walks.

In summary, this was an interesting practical session with presenter and participants sharing relevant classroom knowledge so as to enhance student learning.

Young Historians Research the History of Québec
Animator: Jo Anne Kingsley

reviewed by: Demetra Papazafirooulos

“Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.”
(Confucius, *The Confucian Analects*, 2:15)

Lennoxville Elementary School teacher Jo Anne Kingsley lead an interesting workshop on unit design and construction. Although she used Samuel de Champlain as her practical model, the theoretical and academic underpinnings can be easily transferred to any elementary historical topic. As she constructed the many and varied learning situations, Kingsley noted that she was ever mindful of the teachings of Jack Whitehead of Bishop’s University and specifically liked the following all encompassing notion. Whitehead asserted that “true learning must include spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic values”. To Kingsley, this became a major guiding principal that framed her unit development.

- Based in large measure on a constructivist framework, Kingsley wanted to break what she felt was the traditional history learning cycle by forcing her students to construct deeper understanding by using inquiry skills to ask basic questions. Therefore, “Who was Samuel de Champlain?” and “Was Samuel de Champlain a hero?” became two central questions that guided student inquiry over the length of the project.
- Students had to be able to manipulate primary and secondary source material and understand that history was not a “science”. Therefore, she encouraged her students to formulate ideas based on numerous sources and to be as critical and as questioning as possible. As but one simple exercise, Kingsley would often stop a video at a significant point and have the students speculate on what might happen next. She hoped that their assumptions would be based on their own acquired knowledge, practical experiences, critical thinking abilities, and what they may have seen up to that point in the presentation.
- Where feasible, Kingsley encouraged role-playing situations as a way to introduce some passion and some action into the story under investigation. By acting out various scenes and historical encounters, the pupils were able to see - via a different medium - how the past might be interpreted in the present.

Acknowledging the every-day reality of time restraints for the teaching of the social studies in the elementary curriculum, Kingsley specifically noted that several months were needed for her students to adequately explore the area and to begin to bring closure to this unit activity. A positive aspect of this extended time frame is that she was able to make professional and educational adjustments as the unit progressed, and her students were able to make meaningful integration with other school disciplines. Additionally, the long time frame permitted her students ample opportunity to internalize material, pursue individual research interests, and to generate hypotheses.

The Use of the Historical Novel in the Social Studies Classroom

Animator: Ann Cohen

reviewed by: Teresa Commodari

“The art of the novel happens because the storyteller’s own experience of men and things ... has moved him to an emotion so passionate that he can no longer keep it shut up in his heart.”

(Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, c1000)

Ann Cohen, a consultant with the Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, lead an informative workshop centering on how elementary practitioners can make the historical novel more of a centerpiece within their regular classroom offerings. Suggesting that historical novels can often bridge the gulf between the realities of the present and the past, Ms. Cohen noted that there are a number of significant pedagogical reasons for the use of historical fiction in the classroom:

- Historical fiction is storytelling and journeys.
- Historical fiction conveys a sense of time, culture, and history.
- Historical fiction often describes the human drama behind major political and social events.
- Historical fiction can be used as metaphor.
- Historical fiction interprets ethical and moral issues and often situates them on a human level.
- Historical fiction transports the reader back in time and brings relevance to historical events as the reader relates to and interacts with the characters portrayed in the novel.

Armed with many examples of historical fiction, Ms. Cohen illustrated how various books can be used with key themes directly related to the social studies programs. Bernice Thurman Hunter’s *Booky*, as but one example, explores some of the human dimensions and societal concepts of the Great Depression of the 1930’s through the eyes and experiences of a young girl. Via such identification, today’s youngsters may imagine what it may have been like to live in such times.

Dogsong, on the other hand, raises many ethical and cultural themes by describing how a fourteen year old Eskimo boy longs to learn the traditions of his People. As well as being exposed to a starkly different way of life in a remote geographical region, students may well ponder how his concerns might be relevant to some groups in contemporary North America.

Notwithstanding her strong support of the use of historical fiction in the classroom, Ms. Cohen cautioned all participants that they had to be on the lookout for the dangers of incorrect “facts”, racial stereotyping, and misleading role functions. She stressed the need for teachers to model the differences between fact and opinion, and to challenge students to see how various eras may have viewed societal roles and expectations. Historical fiction is exciting and can bring history to life for elementary pupils!

Heroes in our Midst
Animator: Norma Humphrey

reviewed by: Isabelle Lavoie

*“Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”*
(Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I, 87)

Ms. Humphrey, a classroom teacher with the Eastern Townships School Board and a graduate student at Bishop’s university, shared her innovative curriculum design. Combining her years as a practitioner with the contemporary findings of relevant North American research findings, Ms. Humphrey demonstrated how the general notion of “inquiry learning” can be applied by elementary students through a systematic study of their own community.

Acknowledging that what might considered the traditional study of facts tended to alienate grade five and six students from the discipline of history, and linking the need for students to study and become involved within their own community, Ms. Humphrey designed an innovative approach that can be replicated by other elementary classroom teachers. Briefly, Ms. Humphrey utilized some student teachers from Bishop’s University as “team leaders” for small and carefully crafted groups of student learners that balanced abilities, skills, and interests. Each study group had to research local heroes.

Designed to engage the students in what might be termed “real life skills”, the groups had to initiate initial research to discover past notables, establish an appropriate research approach, keep accurate records, collect visual and other documentation related to their particular character, interview descendants and/or other interested persons and, finally, produce a book.

Throughout this exercise, the groups used a wide range of skills; such as but not necessarily limited to, brainstorming, interviewing, analyzing written and pictorial material, synthesizing museum and field trip data, writing and editing print narratives. Via this interactive and personal process, students learned how to gather primary and secondary data and discovered the differences between these sets of data. Additionally, each group was largely responsible for their own work schedule and so had to allocate their time and resources carefully within the overall guidelines that had been established for all of the working groups.

The culminating public launch of the books to an appreciative audience of friends and relatives capped a most rewarding sojourn into the history and development of a particular community. The skills learned and the data collected will stay with these young researchers for a long, long time!

McCord Museum: Where History Comes Alive!

reviewed by: Jon G. Bradley & Allan Patenaude

“Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation; then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum.”

(Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, 1938)

During the Conference, a significant number of participants partook of guided tours of the McCord Museum. This is a generic report offering an overview of the Museum’s educational projects. The recently renovated McCord Museum is a comfortable and inviting space for students and teachers. Fully handicapped accessible with work areas set aside for students, the McCord welcomes whole class visits. Situated in the heart of Montreal, this rejuvenated facility offers a tantalizing glimpse of what life was like in historic Montreal, Quebec, and Canada.

While individuals and groups are encouraged to journey through the McCord at their leisure and to explore their own learning in their own way, a number of exciting on-site learning packages have been assembled for school-aged pupils and will be offered during the 1999-2000 school year.

Each *Discovery Visit* includes a film screening and lasts for about two hours. Structured around the “five keys to learning history”, the topics include “You Are What You Ware”, “Wrapped in the Colours of the Earth”, and “Simply Montreal”. The “five keys” are used to observe, ask about, and make sense of the various objects selected for each theme. Each of these selected areas has a didactic component, a hands-on component, as well as an experiential component.

The three *Workshop Visits* are designed to help students discover history by observing and asking about objects from the past and by making their own object to take home as a souvenir of their experience. The current visits are: “Silver Trade Ornaments”, “Manituminaki: The Power of Glass Beads”, and “Totem? Totem!”. Similar to the *Discovery Visits*, each of these *Workshop Visits* lasts about two hours and includes a film screening.

Want a *self-guided tour*? Teachers can acquire specifically prepared educational material that includes floor plans, exhibit descriptions, and text notations so that classes can roam the Museum in a less formal manner.

The McCord Museum is a safe place to explore History! It provides concrete and exciting activities for pupils in either official language and specifically welcomes and encourages visits from elementary schools.

As a not-for-profit institution, the McCord Museum must levy admission and user fees to help off-set the expenses of mounting displays, maintaining exhibitions, and designing educational programs. For additional information, visit the McCord’s web site:

www.mccord-museum.qc.ca

Experience Heritage in Your Classroom
Animators: Michael Cooper and Lynne Rodier

reviewed by: Michele Wright

Your name is Beatrice Brandemark. You are 54 years old and separated from your husband. You are fluent in Danish and German, but speak very little English or French. In Denmark, you have been a hospital clerk and a medical lab technician for 30 years. While you have no arranged employment, you are confident you can find a job in Canada. Will you be allowed in?

As a participant in the hands-on workshop *Experience Heritage in Your Classroom*, I was faced with this dilemma ... and a real-life immigration officer played by another Montreal teacher. Presenters Mike Cooper and Lynne Rodier invited us to experience activities from *We Are Canadians*, part of the CRB Foundation Heritage Project. Such role playing situations allow students to place themselves in the shoes of perspective immigrants in the years 1910, 1947, 1967, and 1992. With passport in hand, they are accepted or rejected according to the policy dictates in force at the time. Students will empathize with newcomers to Canada as well as gain vicarious experiences concerning Canadian immigration policies and procedures.

We Are Canadians is just one of the learning resources available within the Heritage Project. The presenters briefly introduced *Canadians in the Global Community* which is a cross curricular program designed for secondary schools. This unit is divided into four modules; namely, (1) Sustaining our Environment, (2) War, Peace, and Security, (3) Decisions for Development, and (4) a special pilot project focusing on Canada's arts and culture entitled Images of Canada.

Perhaps the best known materials within the Heritage Project are the *Heritage Minutes* which are regularly shown on commercial television as well as in theaters on the big movie screens. Part of this workshop was spent viewing examples of these minute long mini-documentaries and discussing pedagogical implications and uses within the elementary social studies framework.

Finally, the presenters spoke about *Heritage Fairs*. These concurrent student-based public exhibitions are meant to complete the link between history on television, in the classroom, and in the local community. Students work in collaboration with business and community groups to develop and present their own Canadian Heritage Projects.

For more information on the wide range of pedagogical materials as well as for more detail regarding various projects and exhibitions, teachers are encouraged to visit:

www.heritageproject.ca

And, for the record, I, Beatrice Brandemark, was allowed into Canada!

Speaking Across the Curriculum

Animator: William Brooks

reviewed by: Karen Gordon

*“Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,
You would say it hath been all in all his study.”
(William Shakespeare, King Henry the Fifth, I, i)*

This session, animated by Mr. William Brooks of Lower Canada College, focused on the use of debating as a powerful and beneficial vehicle within the realm of the regular elementary classroom. Academically, debating lends itself most strongly to the areas of social studies and language arts, and encompasses not just oral skills but is based in large measure on research and group collaboration.

In a nut shell, there are three basic “rules” that apply to all debating sessions; namely, (1) there are two sides (a pro and a con); (2) there is one subject or resolution which is the main focus of the debate; and (3) the affirmative side always promotes the resolution or subject while the negative side always opposes the same subject or resolution.

According to Mr. Brooks, while there are three kinds of resolutions that can be used in the classroom, the best to use with elementary students is what might be termed “policy”. This kind of resolution is more appropriate for younger students as it usually is a change or course of action that includes facts as well as opinions. The other two, while very entertaining, might not permit the range of introductory abilities needed at the elementary levels.

The main idea behind school debating is to channel student energies and drive in a very controlled venue. Strict rules and time frames exist and all participants are governed by the same procedures. Contrary to what some may have witnessed on television, it is indeed possible to have a serious debate without the interruption of heckling. Additionally, by participating in various forms and styles of debates, students learn about differing styles and manners related to this ancient mode of discourse. Furthermore, the main idea in debating is to debate the “idea” and never to debate the “person” or the “personality” - the ideas may be adversarial but the individuals are not!

Notwithstanding the audience, Mr. Brooks orchestrated a mini-debate in which the resolution *Be it resolved that the school year should be extended to twelve months* did indeed give the workshop registrants a taste of how such a simple resolution can generate meaningful discussion.

In closing, all attendees received a very significant teachers package containing a great deal of practical information of how to begin, sustain, and conclude debates. A spirited time was had by all and mutterings were heard down the hall well after the session ended on whether the school year should be extended to twelve months!

Storytelling in Social Studies
Animator: Elaine Meredith-Brooks

reviewed by: Linda Geiring

“The choice of a point of view is the initial act of a culture.”
(José Ortega Gasset, *The Modern Theme*, 1923)

While acknowledging that most elementary teachers probably use various forms of story telling in their classrooms, Ms. Meredith-Brooks suggested that the pedagogical value of a fully developed and integrated “story telling model” demanded that teachers more formally plan for and execute this exciting mode of discourse. Based upon her own practical experiences as well as her recent research, Meredith-Brooks believes that the “The Story Form Model” provides a practical and educationally sound framework that can be easily implemented by elementary classroom practitioners.

One of the more common forms of story telling is that which might be characterized as “The Tylerian Model”. In this framework and approach to story telling, which has traditionally been used in the schools of Quebec, the teacher would impose her/his understanding of the material onto the pupils. Furthermore, this practice would be cemented via the various assessment models which would demand that the children regurgitate the teacher’s point of view as if it were their own. According to Meredith-Brooks, one of the main pedagogical difficulties with the Tylerian approach was that it did not make room or allow for individual pupil accounts and, furthermore, tended to reduce all interpretations to a single view. More seriously, though, she pointed out that material “learned” in such a manner was not internalized by the learner and so was often forgotten as quickly as it was memorized.

On the other hand, “The Story Form Model” - based on the research of Kieran Egan of Simon Fraser University - allows students to deduce their own meanings from the stories. Accepting the notion that narratives can help students deal with complex, messy, and abstract ideas, this model encourages students to discuss character, plot, and dilemma so that a deeper and more personalized understanding is realized. There are five elements to this structured approach; namely,

- Identifying the importance of the topic
- Finding binary opposites
- Organizing the content into story form
- Concluding or resolving the conflict
- Evaluating the understanding of the topic

Via a workshop scenario, Meredith-Brooks demonstrated the model and lead the participants through the various developmental stages. Clearly, “The Story Form Model” provided a wonderful template which can be adapted by elementary classroom teachers so that pupils may experience the personal power of narrative.

Heritage Post Magazine
Animators: Len Dent and Louise Sorel

Reviewed by: Demetra Papazafiroopoulos

*“What thou lov’st well is thy true heritage
Whose world, or mine or theirs or is it of note?”*
(Ezra Pound, *Cantos*, XXXI)

As background and in order to place the present significant renovations into context, it was noted that Heritage Post Magazine has been in existence since 1991. A professional and polished bilingual history-oriented magazine, financially supported by Canada Post Corporation and the CRB Foundation, the magazine is currently distributed free of charge to approximately 65,000 elementary and secondary schools, universities, and community libraries. Over the last few years, and especially as a result of a recent cross-Canada review, it has been determined that the focus of the magazine is seen more as “teacher background” rather than its original intended use as “primary student material”. In light of these revelations, the decision has been made to revamp the magazine – hence the current workshop to elicit teacher input – so that it becomes far more appealing to students in the 4th to 9th grade ranges.

It is important to note that the first aim of the Canada Post School Programs initiative is to help students “develop an understanding of and an appreciation for Canada and Canadians”. Furthermore, the Corporation wishes to develop materials that will help provide students with an understanding of “the social, political and economic forces that shapes the past and present and that may influence the future”. Additionally, students need to be exposed to “the democratic process at the community, provincial and federal levels, and need to appreciate how Canada has evolved as a free and democratic society”.

Practically, Heritage Post Magazine will be published three times during the school year (tentatively September, January, and April), and each issue will combine some standard and continuing elements with targeted curriculum themes. As well as containing articles related to stamps, stamp collecting, stamp clubs, pen pals, and cultural importance of stamps (the magazine is after all being financially supported by Canada Post!), each issue will concentrate on a particular major theme; such as, history of model lesson plans, research suggestions for student projects, web site lists, puzzles, visuals, as well as a narrative that is written for and directed at students. Furthermore, the French and English version are contained within the same publication, thus making this journal very usable for second language learning.

Canada Post has established a set of lofty ideals and goals! Heritage Post Magazine is seen as a key ingredient in helping the next generation of citizens gain a better understanding of the history of Canada and to more fully appreciate and become involved in its democratic processes.

Authentic Assessment

Animator: Bev Steele

reviewed by: Teresa Commodari

“Assessments are authentic according to the degree to which that are meaningful to and helpful for teachers in the exploration of their practice.”

(K. Tellez, 1996, *Authentic Assessment*, page 707)

In this jam-packed session, Bev Steele lead the participants through a number of issues surrounding that heart stopping concept of assessment and evaluation. Acknowledging that there are many ways to evaluate, many stated purposes to differing kinds of evaluation, and much emotion attached to the general issue of assessment, Ms. Steele nonetheless expertly painted a practical context in which authentic assessment emerged as the only really viable form to accommodate the evolving new elementary social studies and secondary history programs of study.

As an evaluation specialist with the Ministry of Education based at 600 Fullum Street, Ms. Steele works closely with anglophone teachers throughout the province in helping schools and school boards develop meaningful evaluation strategies. In light of the fact that the newly emerging curriculum reform will put into the classrooms a modified curriculum with altered content and greatly enhanced possibilities for local input, it is essential that the accompanying evaluation strategies be developed such that they are complementary to the new programs and are based on the most relevant of current educational research.

Ms. Steel outlined five major concerns that must be taken into account by teachers and teaching teams as they design their overall evaluation strategy for the new programs. Taken as a whole, these notions comprise an “evaluation blueprint” that may be applied to the elementary social studies curricula. Specifically, these assessment contexts or stages may be summarized as: (1) the goal, (2) by whom, (3) the basis, (4) the criteria, and (5) the activities.

- Acknowledging that student assessment must be viewed via methods that emphasize student performance rather than academic content, it is necessary to use evaluation tools and strategies that are themselves authentic in nature and which promote awareness of the specific and general learning processes.
- Authentic assessment should be viewed as a joint professional responsibility that actively involves all school stakeholders to the level of their expertise.

- Acknowledging that links are to be formed between various thinking tasks as well as performance tasks, decisions have to be made in regards to how students are to realistically demonstrate their knowledge:
 - by the manner in which they apply their knowledge
 - by the multiple resources they use
 - by the quality of the research they carry out
 - by the way they choose to exhibit their work

- In determining criteria, one has to decide to what extent the students revealed their knowledge base, integrated the information they incorporated, made meaningful and interesting comparisons and used appropriate language to show understanding of the content area.

- Authentic assessment allows pupils to use what might be considered the normal forms of presentation; such as, project, presentation, model, collage, etc. However, dramatic presentations, other forms of detailed research, as well as use of pictorial arrays, time lines, audio-visual shows, and computer renditions, etc. should be accommodated within the whole range of this evaluation regime.

As a concrete example, Ms. Steele used a possible project on the life of a local hero. This is a realistic model as such a project combines the local input requirements exemplified in the new program along with the in-depth study of a historical/contemporary figure. In her scenario, Ms. Steele suggested that such a project could be presented to the whole class, to the teacher alone, or even to a group of parents. The oral presentation might take the form of a dramatic event, a question and answer session, or even a semi-formal speech. Alternately, a written paper would also demonstrate language use, research skills, organizational abilities, sequencing knowledge, etc. Furthermore, visuals such as time lines, montages, picture boards, etc. combine text and word that might demonstrate various degrees of concept attainment.

Ms. Steele emphasized that students should not be grilled in what might be considered a “traditional” skill oriented format but, rather, students must be given many and varied opportunities to demonstrate cross-discipline abilities in an overall attempt to make the material relevant to students, practical, and somewhat a mirror of real life situations. Authentic assessment is a pro-active measure that allows for the greatest possible range of teacher input to coincide with the greatest possible range of student output so that a truly meaningful and realistic assessment can be obtained by the joining together of these two energies.

Why Elementary Students Cannot Read Maps!

Animator: Jacqueline Anderson

reviewed by: Teresa Commodari

“Journey over all the universe in a map, without the expense and fatigue of traveling, without suffering the inconvenience of heat, cold, hunger, and thirst.”
(Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, III, 6)

Professor Jacqueline Anderson, of the Geography Department of Concordia University, opened her workshop by reporting to the apt audience some of her school research concerning children and maps. In one of her recent studies, for example, Anderson noted that elementary pupils were very enthusiastic about maps and responded most positively to the question that asked them: “How do you feel about maps?” However, the same group of students, when asked the same question a year later in their first year of secondary school, showed a dramatic 48% decline in interest. What could have possibly contributed to such a significant decrease? Why do students appear to be so fearful of maps?

In another study, Anderson noted that pupils had great difficulties differentiating between various kinds of maps. She pointed out that different skills are needed to properly use, for example, a metro map, a road map, a city map, and a weather map. While all are indeed maps, each has its own peculiarities for interpretation and, to a certain extent, each requires a different orientation in order to be read properly with ease. According to Professor Anderson, there are two major academic weaknesses exhibited by elementary pupils moving on to secondary school; namely,

1. the vast majority have not experienced working with, manipulating, and interpreting various kinds of maps, and
2. many are lacking in even the most rudimentary and basic skills to adequately use and interpret what might be classified as normal, run-of-the-mill maps.

As if to highlight the confusion and frustration that many elementary students experience, Anderson passed out maps to the grouped participants. It became quickly apparent via various groans and body language, that many of the teacher-participants themselves were not exactly comfortable with this map. While group cohesion and sympathy helped with some of the unease, the use of this aviation map clearly demonstrated that some of the participants were uneasy and confused about map use.

Map reading is an important life-long skill. A visually stimulating tool that has many uses, it is necessary for all elementary teachers to provide a rich, varied, and stimulating map enrichment program for their pupils.

History All Around Us
Animator: Mariana O’Gallagher

reviewed by: Jon G. Bradley & Allan Patenaude

“History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days. What is the worth of all this?”

(Winston Churchill, *House of Commons*, November 12, 1940)

Mariana O’Gallagher, an internationally acclaimed historian, author, guide, and world traveller, lead a very intimate and informal discussion dealing with “the English” within a Quebec historical framework.

The mere designation of a group by name in and of itself presents a wonderful opportunity for students to study how various cultures are portrayed and depicted within a society. For example, the term “English”, from 1760 on, really meant only one thing, and that was the British administration and commercial establishment that settled in the St. Lawrence Valley. However, over time, the word took on a larger meaning and included those who spoke English; such as, the Scots, Welsh, Irish, and even disparate groups such as the Hessians. The current term “anglophone”, for example, did not come into common use until the mid-twenty-century, and the much newer category of “allophone” is a 1970’s invention.

To O’Gallagher, names are important! It is through the study of names that one is able to see how communities developed and how immigration might have occurred. Names are key factors in noting the passing of time and in acknowledging the impact of various individuals, families, and groups upon the historical identity of a city, an area, and a country. Furthermore, names are personal and help elementary pupils establish a direct link with historical time. Through the study of names, students are able to build a historical composite of their own area and relate these newly developing links to their own identity.

Specifically for the elementary levels, the following are representative of some of the many individual and group activities suggested as possible historical name projects:

- Engage in immediate family personal history excursions. Pupils can delve into their own names and derivations as well as research their family.
- The street names in the community can be researched. Who were the individuals that are honoured via such a public display of their name?
- Similarly, which public buildings are named after individuals/families and what connection do these people have with the facility that bears their name?

Acknowledging that history is to some extent a study of individuals over time, O’Gallagher encouraged practitioners to actively become involved in local historical societies and to establish a framework that allowed elementary pupils to “touch” history!

Put Some Sizzle in your Social Studies

Animator: Les Asselstine

reviewed by: Sara Matos

“sizzle (siz’l) 1. v. i. pres. part. sizzling past and past part. sizzled to make a hissing sound, esp. in being fried. 2. n. a noise so made sizzling adj. very hot [imit.]”

(The New Lexicon Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language: Canadian Edition, 1988, page 930.)

Arguing that the teaching and learning about social studies “is not about the destination but rather about the journey”, educational consultant and author Les Asselstine provided a great deal of “fried heat” with his presentation. Via numerous exercises and suggestions shared during the session, Asselstine graphically reinforced his metaphor - by personality and example - as well as concretely demonstrated its effectiveness within the elementary classroom.

As but one way for teachers to help students along this social studies journey of discovery, Asselstine lead the participants through a demonstration of the use of “cooperative brainstorming”. According to Asselstine, varied interactive techniques such as this encourage the students to share information, permit the airing of many possible scenarios, and allow for these differing ideas to be aired in a safe climate.

A strong believer in using concrete artifacts with children, Asselstine suggested that an “artifact of the week” be used to stimulate interest, channel discussion, and provide a degree of intellectual mystery that is too often lacking with more traditional text book social studies approaches. Briefly, an unknown artifact is introduced to the children at the beginning of the week. Via group discussion, the students would hypothesize on what this object might be, how it was made, what was its purpose, and what might it say about the people who made and used it. Such intense discussions often lead pupils to individual research and generally promote open and critical thinking which is so needed when dealing with many of the overriding concepts handles within the social studies curriculum. At the end of the week, a general round-table discussion might lead to the sharing of initial ideas, how ideas were changed, and some narrowing down as to what the artifact actually is.

Mr. Asselstine strongly believes in the power of social studies to bring children to higher levels of thought and conceptualization. The social studies curriculum is the “hub of the curriculum wheel” and it is up to teachers to provide the structures to allow students to let loose their individual creative and inquisitive talents.

III. Networking Form

This networking questionnaire had two broad purposes. Firstly, it was designed to elicit pertinent address/communication information as well as general professional demographics so that the beginnings of a province-wide social studies networking data base might be coordinated from the offices of the Direction des politiques et des projets of the Services à la communauté anglophone. Secondly, the form asked specific questions in regards to potential workshop sessions so as to facilitate next years' conference.

Significantly, 80 forms (an approximate 69% return rate) were completed and the following boards/areas are represented.

Private Schools	17 participants
English Montreal School Board	15 participants
Lester B. Pearson School Board	12 participants
First Nation Schools	11 participants
Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board	6 participants
Riverside School Board	4 participants
Western Quebec School Board	4 participants
New Frontiers School Board	2 participants
Central Quebec School Board	2 participants
Other (CEGEP, students, etc.)	7 participants

Another question asked participants to indicate their **language of instruction**. While such a response may be open to some interpretation (respondents are administrators, or teacher candidates, or teach in both languages, or use another language), it is interesting to note that English as a language of instruction was roughly double that of French (50 responses to 23).

In future, it will be necessary to ask much more specific questions in regards to language of instruction and the teaching of social studies. Further, more precise questions should be asked to determine what other languages (First Nations, German, Hebrew, etc.) are being used in the instruction of social studies skills and concepts.

In a similar manner, one will have to interpret the data that emerges in regards to **grade levels taught** with some care. A few folk indicated that they had a kindergarten assignment, or taught at the secondary level, or were administrators. Also, teacher candidates indicated grades used for *stage* purposes and many, many respondents indicated that they taught in more than one cycle range.

Somewhat akin to the concerns expressed in regards to the language of instruction issues raised above, future questions will have to be more specific in order to target what levels the participants are teaching social studies. In spite of these caveats, 46% of the respondents teach at the cycle III level, 35% at the cycle II level, and 19% at the cycle I level.

Respondents were asked to indicate what other **“specific history/social studies topics”** they would like to see offered at future conferences. Unfortunately, many people left this area blank! Some, on the other hand, provided most general wishes - “Anything to do with Canada” or “Teaching resources” - while others made very specific and pointed requests - “Japanese Canadians during the War” or “Fishing on the Gaspé coast”. One participant, noting that she could only attend a few of the many sessions, simply suggested that we repeat all the sessions next year.

What follows, in descending order, are the requests and suggestions offered by the participants. These comments have been grouped by frequency and editorial license has been used to clarify and codify. In order to balance this list, single observations and requests have been deleted; in other words, at least two people must have indicated the same sort of topic for it to be included below.

(1) By far, the most mentioned need had to do with the new impending curriculum and the clearly expressed desire for more details. Not only was the grade 5/6 program mentioned, but many participants felt that more detailed information was necessary in regards to levels 3/4.

In a rough and somewhat equal grouping, the next concerns related to:

- (2) native/aboriginal history and especially the need for appropriate and sensitive material for pupil use,
- (3) geography and mapping skills at all elementary levels, and
- (4) the general need for appropriate teaching/learning resources.

The next broad grouping consists of:

- (5) assessment and evaluation models as they relate to the new programs,
- (6) immigrant studies (especially as impacting upon the Quebec historical and contemporary scenes), and
- (7) community/neighbourhood studies with some reference to family history.

The last set of concerns consists of:

- (8) the need for INTERNET resources and how these may be utilized by students and teachers to handle the new programs,
- (9) Canadian heroes and important figures, and
- (10) information related to allophones and their impact/place within contemporary Quebec.

The last two questions on the survey were designed to elicit the **names of possible workshop leaders** and even asked each participant if they themselves would animate a session in the near future. Clearly, in order to protect personal confidentiality and avoid any possible embarrassments, this list will be discreetly handled by the Conference Planning Committee of the History Task Force and the names and suggestions will not be made public. However, it is interesting to note that

- 3 participants offered to give sessions next year
- 10 said that they would at least think about giving a session
- 8 educators were recommended as possible workshop animators.

IV. Conference Feed Back Form

A feedback form was designed to be a quick and efficient way for participants to make their feelings known about the conference. Contrary to some evaluation schemes, the planning committee decided that individual workshop evaluations would not take place at the end of each session. It was felt that such extensive information gathering would take up too much time, be administratively clumsy, and perhaps jade the participants so that the final and important general conference evaluation form would be completed in a shoddy and less than complete manner.

Significantly, 85 forms (an approximate 73% return rate) were completed and this data is summarized below.

The first question was designed to situate this conference within the overall school year schedule and participants were asked to choose between **late August and late June**. Unfortunately, a gathering of this kind simply must be held when teacher substitution costs are not an issue. For example, the average substitution costs for 100 participants would be approximately 15,000\$ and that does not factor in the additional costs for the teacher-presenters. It was estimated by the planning committee that a two-day conference with 200 participants and 40 teacher-presenters would need an initial 45,000\$ budget just to cover the related substitution costs! In light of these hard financial realities, the only two logical blocks for continued social studies conferences are late August or late June.

Each professional time frame has its own particular set of pros and cons. For example, the late August period is attractive because teachers begin their school year with lots of new ideas. On the down side, however, is the reality that this time is often needed for room set-up and academic planning. A plus for the late June period is that participants can bring their whole year-long experience to bear and thereby place the individual workshops within a larger and immediate professional landscape. A negative aspect for these June days is that teachers may be changing schools, classes, and/or grades and thereby be in a state of personal and academic flux.

While a few respondents made comments such as “during the school year”, and “February or October would be better”, the percentage breakdown clearly illustrates that the late June time frame is the preferred time block.

79%	Late June
13%	Late August
4%	Either time frame
4%	No response

If the “either time frame” and “no response” percentages are evenly split between the two choices, then the breakdown is even more significant with 83% selecting late June and 17% picking late August. Clearly, these participants have overwhelmingly selected the June professional days as the most appropriate for this social studies conference.

As can be expected, question #2 - which asked individual participants to “**list your three favourite workshops/sessions**” - generated a great deal of diverse and interesting comment. Overall, participants attended one opening plenary session, two compulsory sessions, and four selected workshops. This question was designed to see what the participants really liked and to give the planning committee some hard-nosed data on which workshops might be worthy of repeating at later dates. However, it must be forcefully noted that there is really no way that the information presented by the participants can be used for accurate quantifiable analysis; rather, this data provides a general overview that may be interpreted in the following manner.

82%	Identified three sessions
11%	Illustrated only two sessions
7%	Noted only one session

Clearly, with over 80% of the participants identifying three workshops/sessions they enjoyed during their two-day conference, one can feel that goals were met and aspirations satisfied. Additionally, just over 50% of the participants jotted marginal comments or made notes to justify or explain their personal workshop selections.

Furthermore, a careful reading of all 233 individual participant notations suggests that:

- ▶ participants appreciated workshops that were “well run” and “organized”, met the printed objectives as stated in the conference calendar, and began and ended on time.
- ▶ additionally, participants appreciated sessions that were “très pratique” and “relevant” to their perceived classroom needs.
- ▶ many participants commented on the “active” or “participatory” nature of the session. Clearly, those workshops that involved audience participation/input were favourably received. In a number of cases, the phrase “hands on” was used to positively describe sessions.
- ▶ comments were made highlighting the fact that in many cases the animators were teachers, thereby strengthening the “best practice” professional development model.

► Over 85% of participant comments were related to the individual workshops with less than 15% commenting upon the compulsory sessions. The one compulsory session that appeared most frequently was the QESN networking workshop.

The third question on the evaluation form asked participants to select the **“one aspect”** that they liked **“best”** about the whole conference. As can be appreciated, there were widely divergent comments ranging from organizational details, to the quality of the food, to attributes of individual presenters, to philosophical dimensions. A complicating factor is that many participants noted two, three, and even four things that they liked about the conference. However, notwithstanding this quantitative difficulty and with only 6 respondents (or 7%) failing to make any comment at all, the following is a synthesis in descending order of the major issues identified by the respondents.

► By far, the most recurring theme had to do with the practicality, vitality, and quality of the individual workshops. Participant after participant commented upon the variety of the workshops, the diversity of themes, and the array of choices. Additionally and equally importantly, a constant refrain related to what the participants perceived to be the high quality of the sessions and the professionalism of the animators. This was clearly the most oft repeated **“best aspect”**.

► Many participants also appreciated receiving what might generally be termed **“new information”**; not just in relation to the newly emerging province-wide curricula but also in regards to specific classroom techniques. It is perhaps not surprising to note that many practitioners felt that this was a major strength of the conference.

► Participants described the event as a **“well run conference”**. Positive comments related to the ease of movement, the ambiance, and the overall tenor of the venue.

► Teachers liked meeting and chatting with other teachers! A number of participants specifically noted that exchanging ideas with other teachers was a positive feature and some noted that it was important to meet teachers from other areas of the province.

As a contrast to the previous question, item #4 specifically asked participants to note the **“one aspect”** that they liked **“least”**. Significantly, over one-third of the respondents either left this question blank or made a positive comment to indicate that they had no major complaints to register. However, some participants did indeed register a concern and these issues are grouped and noted in descending order of significance. In the interests of fairness and good sense, concerns/difficulties/problems have to have been noted by at least two different participants; that is, if only one person made a specific criticism then it has not been incorporated into the following array.

► 12 participants (approximately 14%) commented upon what they perceived to be a **“problem”** with the compulsory program sessions. Essentially, these participants wanted more information, more details, and generally felt that there was too much missing from the

presentations. Two of these respondents even wondered if these sessions were premature and should have been held off until a later date when more information was available.

▶ 10 respondents (about 10%) expressed concerns with the physical location. The most oft cited complaint had to do with the air conditioning (too cold), but other areas mentioned included the banging door in 129, lack of toilet paper in some bathrooms, and the need for more directional room number signs.

▶ 8 participants (some 9%) felt that they did not receive enough in the way of concrete/practical materials. This concern appeared to be evenly directed at the compulsory sessions as to individual workshops.

▶ 5 respondents (approximately 6%) felt that certain workshop leaders were not as prepared as they should have been.

▶ 4 respondents (about 5%) felt that the some workshop animators misused the 75 minute time allotment either by starting late or by going past the designed stop times.

▶ 3 participants (some 4%) each commented upon (1) the distribution methods for the free materials, (2) the fact that they could not get their first choices for individual workshops, (3) the lack of lunch on the second day, and (4) the fact that more attendees arrived at sessions than anticipated so there were material distribution difficulties.

The final question was an open ended one that asked participants **“to offer any suggestions for improving and/or expanding future gatherings”**. While a number of respondents used this space to comment upon specific workshops and others, unfortunately, left the area blank, some interesting ideas were nevertheless put forward. All respondents can be assured that all of the ideas will be explored by the Conference Planning Committee. What follows is designed to give a taste of the range and variety of the participant suggestions and is not meant to be an exhaustive list:

- “More clear and explicit stressing (by the workshop animators) of the possibility of using Language Art (class) time for history and citizenship education.”
- “Some presenters had books and other materials. These should be exhibited and sold during the conference.”
- “Donner une periode de temps ou les enseignants peuvent être groupés par cycle d’insegnement et échanger des ideès.”
- “More choices for workshops and fewer compulsory sessions.”
- “This was billed as a Social Studies Conference; therefore, geography should have been given equal billing.”

- “After experiencing the pilot project of the new Reform, invite the schools to share experiences.”
- “How about more museum and historical sights visits and some period dinners?”
- “Start earlier on the second day and build in more coffee breaks for socializing.”
- “Need more input from Native perspective.”

Addendum #1:

Through an administrative oversight, participants were not asked whether they preferred a one day or a two day conference. It is interesting to note that only one respondent indicated that a one day gathering was sufficient while a couple noted that two days, and in one case more, was acceptable. There is some sympathy for a one-day event in that it clearly takes less time, costs less, and does not demand as much time away from the classroom for the practitioners. On the other hand, these very strengths are weaknesses and especially so when teachers from the more remote and distant areas of the province have to justify the expense and time of travel. In light of the fact that the length of this inaugural conference was not an issue as noted by the respondents, one can assume for the time being that a two-day conference is acceptable.

Addendum #2:

For a variety of reasons (the weather being the prime factor), the Monday afternoon reception at the McCord Museum was poorly attended. Designed to be a time when participants might socially mingle and where some initial personal/professional networking might begin, the conference planning committee would not like to see such unique initiatives cancelled. The anecdotal feedback from those who attended the reception clearly indicates that it was a very worthwhile event and bears support and expansion in the future.

V. General Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered in the spirit of collegial support. By all written and oral accounts, this first social studies conference was a resounding success! True, there were a few rough spots, but there is no question that just about everyone who participated found that they had a professionally worthwhile and a personally enjoyable two days.

Based on the various evaluation forms as well as observations gathered during the conference itself, the following recommendations are made to the History Task Force.

I. Main Recommendation:

That the concept of a two-day June social studies conference be maintained and the HTF instructs the conference planning committee to begin work immediately on the next annual event!

II. Secondary Recommendations:

1. Financial/Budgetary:

- ▶▶ The two-day conference participant fee be set at 50.00\$.
- ▶▶ Presenters be required to officially register and pay for the conference.

2. Planning Committee:

- ▶▶ Membership be increased by at least two and not more than four new members.
- ▶▶ Within the realm of possibilities, seek out additional workshops to deal with:
 - (1) newly emerging requirements for the “Geography, History and Citizenship Education” program,
 - (2) native/aboriginal historical and contemporary issues, and
 - (3) technological issues.

▶▶ Using whatever psychic means possible, maintain a creative and complex mix of workshops to appeal to as many eclectic professional tastes as possible.

▶▶ Without prejudice and wherever possible, the planning committee should actively seek out Quebec practicing teachers to be conference workshop animators.

▶▶ Actively and confidentially pursue the participant recommendations for workshop animators.

3. Workshops:

▶▶ Compulsory sessions should be decreased/compressed and individual workshops increased/expanded.

▶▶ Use student volunteers to help maintain time frame boundaries for all sessions.

▶▶ Encourage every presenter to have practical handouts for every workshop for all participants, and use the resources of the HTF where necessary to achieve this goal.

▶▶ Investigate local historical sites; such as Ile Ste. Helene and the Lachine Fur Trade Museum, as well as geographical/physical areas; such as; Mount Royal and the St. Lawrence Seaway, for possible inclusion within the conference framework.

4. Conference:

▶▶ Under the auspices of the planning committee, offer a workshop and sharing experience to all conference presenters to:

- (1) review newly emerging program guidelines,
- (2) establish timetable formats,
- (3) consider possible handouts, and
- (4) discuss and debate their own workshop agenda.

- ▶▶ For June 2000 conference, set participant limit at 200, or 300 if a combined elementary/secondary gathering.
- ▶▶ Maintain current block scheduling program to maximize flexibility.
- ▶▶ Target and advertise future plenary sessions to be “special”.
- ▶▶ Reschedule overall time frames to include more workshop blocks.
- ▶▶ Continue and strengthen function of teacher candidate volunteers.
- ▶▶ Within budgetary and scheduling constraints, add an afternoon coffee break.
- ▶▶ Discontinue formal “Marketplace” but make free space and some time available for commercial display and the selling of materials. Furthermore, use conference booklet as well as on-site advertising to highlight displays and sales.
- ▶▶ Revise various conference participant/presenter/volunteer evaluation instruments to be more reflective of clientele and to gather more precise information.
- ▶▶ Set aside significant chunks of time should be set aside for socializing and meaningful professional chit-chat.